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REMARKS
AND
REFLECTIONS
ON
Select Passages
IN THE
BOOK OF PSALMS.

PRINCIPALLY INTENDED, AND CALCULATED FOR THE
EDIFICATION AND COMFORT OF SUCH OF THE
CHILDREN OF GOD AS ARE MUCH EXER-
CISED WITH TEMPTATIONS, AND
IN TRYING CIRCUMSTANCES.

“ Strengthen the weak Hands, and confirm the feeble Knees.”
ISAIAH, XXXV. 3.

“ Comfort ye, comfort ye my People, saith your God.”
ISAIAH, xl. 1.

BY B. MARCHANT.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

It is hoped the candid reader will excuse, and correct, any orthographical errors, &c. he may perceive in this work, they being principally owing to the Author's residing at a distance from the printing-office,—which prevented his superintending the work as it advanced. And he also trusts, that every pious soul, into whose hands this Commentary may come, and who reads it with attention, will readily perceive his motive for publishing it, and be disposed to cover its imperfections with the mantle of love, while at the same time, he looks beyond the instrument, to God alone for a blessing.

THE EPISTLE TO THE READER.

THE writing of this book has cost me many thoughts, and those who would profit by it must not think much if it cost them some; and if they cannot be contented to bestow some serious thoughts on it, it will be lost labour to read it: As happiness is the sole end of all our labours, so this book aims at nothing else—how is man to be lamented that is in a natural carnal state, and hath no understanding of the things that belong to his everlasting peace. Jeremiah said, “*they have none understanding, they are wise to do evil; but to do good they have no knowledge.*” Man in a natural state is absolutely incapable of practising holiness or enjoying happiness: If you ask, what is meant by a natural state? It is that state in which we are under the guilt of sin, and the curse of the law; are subject to the power of Satan, and influenced by evil propensities—from this state none are released but by being united to Christ. Man in a state of nature, if he only gets the evil desire of the heart fulfilled with the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, how doth he think all is well with him, and knowest not that he is wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked—enquiries after happiness, and the rules for attaining it, are not so necessary and useful to mankind as the arts of consolation

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solation, and supporting one's self under affliction,—convinced of this from experience, I thought I could not engage in a more benevolent attempt, than that of offering comfort to my suffering fellow creatures, in commenting on the Psalms of David; the reading of which has been my daily practice, morning and evening for many years. I have made a feeble attempt to weave my remarks into a treatise, and lay them in a regular form before the world, for the benefit of such as might need, and would be glad of the consolation afforded in them, and I hope they will be found satisfactory to the christian labouring under any species of affliction or distress. I am under the necessity of confining my remarks on each Psalm within a narrow compass: I claim no merit, and expect no fame from this work, which I publish from a sincere and single design to bless my fellow-creatures, and I hope God will not fail to make my humble endeavours subservient to so happy an end. And should that end be obtained, should one tear be wiped from the eye of sorrow, one groan suppressed at the heart of grief, should any learn from hence, to support with patience the weight of calamity, and to look up under it with becoming resignation to the Father of comforts; every good heart will allow, that an end so desirable as this, will render alike insignificant the breath of applause, or the blast of censure. I am satisfied, there remains so much candour and humanity amongst us, that
the

the design of the work is sufficient to give it protection, if it cannot give it approbation :— It hurts no body, and therefore may pass itself with more safety; and it offers its service to do every body good; which I think should be taken kindly, even by those who stand in no need of it. This work meddles with no controversies, so also with no sides and parties—to the end that so I might not offend any christian, but endeavour to profit him, which surely is best done by advancing devotion and piety, not opinions and disputes; and I heartily wish all my brethren would be pleased effectually to prosecute this plan.

I shall give you the reasons of my appearing in print, and then a little counsel and direction, that the following may turn to your soul's advantage. The true reasons of my sending this piece into the world (such as it is) are these : First, the wonderful dealings of God towards me, in the course of his gracious and providential dispensations. Luther could not understand some Psalms till he was afflicted :— He observed that the Christ-cross was no letter in the book, and yet (saith he) it hath taught me more than all the letters in the book.— Afflictions may be considered as a golden key, by which the Lord opens the rich treasure of his word to the souls of his people; and this in some measure, through grace, my soul hath experienced. When Sampson had found honey, he gave some to his father and mother to eat ; much honey I have found in God's dealings

with me, and therefore I cannot be such a churl, as not to give others some of my honey to taste; the language of every believer should be, Come, and I will tell you the wonders of his grace, the faithfulness of his promises, and the riches of his mercy to my soul: Gracious experiences are to be communicated. When God hath dealt bountifully with us, others should reap some good by us. Our mercies and experiences should be as a running spring at our doors, which is not only for our own ease, but also for our neighbours, yea, and for strangers too. Secondly, I considered that what I committed to paper would be permanent, and spread itself further by far, for time, place, and persons, than my voice could reach. The pen may be said to be an artificial tongue, it speaks to them afar off, as well as to those that are near, it speaks not only to the present age, but also to succeeding ages: I may assign another reason, few men, if any, have iron memories; how soon is a sermon preached forgotten, when a sermon written remains; most men's memories are very treacherous, especially in good things; few men's memories are an heavenly store-house or magazine for their souls. In the Psalms every afflicted and distressed christian may have a proper salve for their sore, every believer may in this looking-glass behold his face, his hand, his heart, his ways, his works, here he may see all his diseases discovered, and proper remedies proposed and applied; here he may find arguments to silence him

him, and means to quiet him, when it is at the worst with him; in every storm here he may find a tree to shelter him; here he may have a light to guide him, and in every peril, here he may find a buckler to defend him; in every distress, here he may find a cordial to strengthen him, and in every trouble, here he may find a staff to support him; I wish to act a friendly part—man is made to be a friend—he that is not friendly, is not worthy to have a friend. Christian friendship ties such a knot, that Great Alexander cannot cut. Summer friends are of little value, but winter friends are worth their weight in gold; I ask, who can deny this? especially in those days, wherein real, faithful, constant friends are so rare to be found; are they not like Jonah's gourd in these days, at one time promising and flourishing, at another fading and withering; their friendship may be compared to some plants in the water, which have broad leaves on the surface, but scarce any root at all; their friendship is like lemons, cold within, hot without; their expressions are high, but their affections are low; they speak much, but do little.

The second thing promised, was the giving of you a little good counsel, that you may so read the following practical commentary as that it may turn much to your soul's advantage; many read good books and get nothing, because they read them over cursorily, slightly, superficially; but he that would read to profit must:—First, Read and look up for a

blessing 1 Cor. iii. 6. 7. Paul may plant, and
 Apollos may water, but all will be to no pur-
 pose, except the Lord give the increase, God
 must do the deed when all is done, or else
 all that is done will do you no good; look
 off from man, and look up to God, who alone
 can make it a blessing to you. Again, he that
 would read to profit, must read and meditate :
 Meditation is the food of your souls, it is the
 very stomach and natural heat whereby spiritual
 truths are digested; prayer without meditation
 is dry and formal, and reading without medita-
 tion is useless and unprofitable. Meditation
 is a soul fattening duty, it is a grace-strengthen-
 ing duty, it is a duty-crowning duty.—
 Gerson calls meditation, the nurse of prayer.
 You may read much, and you may hear much,
 yet without meditation you will never be
 eminent christians. I exhort you to read and
 do, read and practice what you read, or else
 all your reading will do you no good. In di-
 vine account, a man knows no more than he
 doth. Profession without practice, will but
 make a man twice told a child of darkness; to
 speak well is to sound like a cymbal, but to do
 well is to act like an angel. He that practiseth
 what he reads and understands, God will help
 him to understand what he understands not.
 There is no fear of knowing too much, though
 there is much fear in practising too little.—
 Luther professeth, that he profited more in the
 knowledge of the scriptures by prayer, in a
 short space, then by study in a longer. I charge
 you

you to keep from false opinions ; from error and sedition; let your hearts be upright, your judgements sound, and your lives holy; love the truth and obey the truth: Let me beseech you for God's sake, for Christ's sake, and for your soul's sake, keep yourselves from false teachers, from false doctrine; from false worship, and from false opinions. If you will be tasting and sipping at Babylon's cup, you must expect to receive more or less of Babylon's plagues. Detest a narrow, contracted, bigotted spirit, it is disgraceful to the religion of Jesus Christ, be one with every one that is one with Christ; endeavour to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, and through all. Every one that loveth him that begot, loveth him also that is begotten of him; by this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep his commandments. He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen. Oh! consider what a dishonour it is to the gospel, to see those that profess themselves sons of the same God, members of the same Christ, temples of the same spirit, heirs of the same glory, jarring one with another: It is strange and unnatural, that lilies should prove thorns to one another; that those who are saints in profession, should be devils in practice one to another; that God's
diamonds

diamonds should cut one another: For wolves to devour the lambs, is no wonder; but for lambs to devour one another, is a wonder, and a disgrace to the religion of the gospel. Oh! that christians instead of loving one another, should hate one another: O how unlike are we to that God, whom we profess to be our God! He is full of love, full of goodness, and full of mercy and patience; how lamentable, that christians cannot bear and forbear one with another; do not wicked men warm themselves at the sparks of our divisions, and say, it is as we would have it. O that you would lay this to heart, and throw away all discord and divisions and heart-burnings, it is a disgrace to your profession; labour for love and affection, and be one with every one that is one with Christ; labour for a healing spirit: You cannot love God if you do not love the people of God. If any man saith he loveth God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar. Let brotherly love continue. There are many that cannot love a man unless he be of their opinion, or a member of their church, although he be a member of Christ. Every man hath a good opinion of his own opinion; but alas! friends, it is not this opinion nor that opinion, nor this way, nor that way will bring a man to heaven without faith in Christ; let me beseech you to love every man that is a godly man, let him be of what way or form he will: "*And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart, and of one soul,*" Acts iv. 32.

A
PRACTICAL COMMENTARY,
OR, EXPOSITION
UPON THE
BOOK of PSALMS.

P S A L M I.

VERSE 1. “ *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.*”

THE first words of the first psalm, and the last words of the last, are the prophet David's Alpha and Omega of knowledge and practice. The Psalmist comprehends all that belongs to man's knowledge, and all that belongs to his practice in those two; first, in understanding true blessedness, and then in praising God for it. David's Alpha is *Beatus, v. 1.* O the blessedness of righteous men! and his Omega is *laudate Dominum*; O that men would therefore bless the Lord: He begins this book with God's blessing of man, and he ends it with man's praising of God; the last verse of the last psalm is, “ *Let every thing that hath breath*

breath, praise the Lord." Yet he adds one note more to us in particular, "*Praise ye the Lord.*" and there is the end of all.

Verse 3. "*And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.*" All fruits of christians are not all of one sort, for some of them are general, growing upon all the trees of the garden, upon all the branches grafted into the true vine, general duties of piety which lie equally upon every man's shoulder, as love, joy, peace; some are special which every tree must bring forth according to his kind, as being his proper fruit, whereby he must be known in that calling wherein God hath placed him; thus, the olive tree hath its fatness, the fig tree bringeth forth his own fruit in due season; and thus the household of faith oweth a service to God after one sort in the general fruits of holiness; and after another sort in the proper fruits of a particular calling, as they are the several heads of one mystical body.

P S A L M II.

Verse 11. "*Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.*" Fear and service go hand in hand: Fear goes usually before service; unless our service proceed from fear, it is hollow and worthless; inward dispositions are as the kernel, outward acts are as the shell; he is therefore but a rotten nut that hath outward service

service without inward fear: It is true that perfect love thrusts out fear; but it is as true that fear brings in that perfect love, which is joined with the reverence of sons; for there is no real servant of God but fears filially; and again, God hath no son, but that son serves him; even the holy Son of God was so in the form of a servant that he served indeed; and so served that he endured all sorrow, and fulfilled all righteousness: So every true christian, every real believer in Christ is a son and heir to the King of heaven; and his language must be, I serve.

Verse 12. *“ Kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little: blessed are all they that put their trust in him.”* There were in former days more love to be seen among friends and relations than is to be discerned in the present degenerate age; there were many good uses made of kissing one another in God's word: First, it was much practised among kins-folks, for instance Jacob kissed Rachel, and told how near of kin he was to her; but believer let me tell thee, there is no person so near of kin to thee as Jesus Christ, remember he is thy Father, as he provided an inheritance for thee; and he is thy brother, as he divided this inheritance with thee; and never forget for one moment that he died to give thee possession of that inheritance; he is likewise thy twin-brother, and so like thee, that your conditions are so mingled, that the Father shall find thy sins in him, and his righteousness

ousness in thee, therefore I exhort thee to kiss this Son as thy kinsman. This kiss was in use likewise when friends parted; thus Laban rose up early in the morning and kissed his sons and daughters; when thou departest to thy worldly business, be sure that by faith and prayer ye kiss Christ. And lastly, they kissed in reconciliation; thus David kissed Absalom. If thou hast not discharged thy stewardship well, act the part of Zaccheus, confess to God, reconcile thyself to him, and kiss him in his Son.

P S A L M III.

Verse 6. “ *I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set themselves against me round about.*” The very heathen had observed, that God doth not love his children with a weak affection, but with a strong masculine love.— There is not the least doubt that distracting fear is the portion of wicked men: It is a truth, the troubles of the righteous are many, but their real fears are few. “ *I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people,*” is the resolve of faith; whosoever hath much fear hath but little faith; wherefore are ye afraid; “ *O ye of little faith,*” were the words of our Saviour to his disciples; when fear encreaseth, faith decreaseth, and when faith is at the height, fear is gone; where there is no faith, there can be nothing but fear.

Verse 8. “ *Salvation belongeth unto the Lord, thy blessing is upon thy people.*” The church’s help is not in herself, and the dangers of it are
far

far greater than she is able without better help than her own to withstand, so was it with the children of Israel at the red sea, so with the three children in the fire, what help had they in themselves, being bound? God is pleased sometimes to suffer his church and children to be brought to these straits, that his children being driven out of all other expectations, might be vehement in prayer, and fetch help from heaven which they want in themselves: The extremity of the Israelites at the sea made Moses cry to the Lord with vehemency; and when Jehosaphat knew not what to do, his eyes were towards the Lord: We may further observe that the church and people of God are never helpless, because they have an omnipotent power with them and for them; this is their privilege and sanctuary. When Christ was helpless, and his disciples fled from him, yet then he had the presence and power of his Father; and so hath every child of God, as well as Christ himself, which is a most firm prop to stay and lean upon in all extremities; happy for us when we can oppose this help of God, again still the threats and boisterous proceedings of our enemies.

PSALM IV.

Verse 8. *"I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep, for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety."* Does every rich man dwell in safety? Can every rich man lie down in peace and sleep? No, nor every poor man neither:—

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That poverty which comes from the hand of God, is as rich a blessing as any that comes from his hand; he that is poor with a good conscience, that hath laboured and yet not prospered, knows to whom to go, and what to say, Lord thou hast put gladness into my heart, more than in the time when corn and wine increased (more now than when I had more) I will therefore lay me down and sleep; he that is rich, and he that is poor, with a good conscience, may enjoy peace, sleep, and safety.

P S A L M V.

Verse 3. *“ My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.”* It is best to begin with him who is best; it was an ancient custom with God’s people to seek him in the morning, early in the morning, thou shalt lose nothing by denying thyself that soft indulgence in the morning, which too many immoderately accustom themselves to; the heathens attended to this good habit of rising early, although their worship was prophane and superstitious, yet by the light of nature they took this course; from whence we may learn, first, that God is to be sought unto without delay; as it is with vows, so with prayers, defer not to pay them, defer not to pray; seek ye first the kingdom of God, was delivered by our Saviour: First, in time, not only chiefly, but early. Then, secondly, God must be sought unto with diligence, *“ In the morning will I direct*

direct my prayer," saith David, that is diligently; they that come in the morning about their worldly business, are considered to be diligent in their business; we must lay our strength and spirits out in seeking God. It is not a slight enquiry that finds out God; we read that he is found of some that seek him not at all, but that he is found of any who seek him negligently, we read not; free grace prevents those who have not ability to seek him, but it seldom if ever, meets those that will not lay out their abilities in seeking him.

P S A L M VI.

Verse 1. "*O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.*" To be rebuked was to be chidden, but to be chastened was to be beaten; and yet the Psalmist was heartily afraid of the first, of the least of them, when it was to be done in anger; this word that is here to rebuke, is for the most part to convince by way of argument; so that this doth but amount to an instruction and an amendment; yet David here would not be disputed withall, he would not be instructed nor amended by God in his anger, the anger of God is such a catechism, such a way of teaching as the law was; the law is a schoolmaster, but such a schoolmaster as brings not a rod but a sword; God's anger should instruct us, but if we use it not aright, it hardens us; for when a sinner considers himself to be under the anger of God, naturally he conceives such an

horror, as puts him further off. When Adam heard the voice of God in an accent of anger, he fled from his presence, and hid himself among the trees.

Verse 2. "*Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am weak : O Lord, heal me, for my bones are vexed.*" The reason of our own weakness is a good motive to God for mercy; that thou art weak of thyself is a just reason to induce God to bring thee to himself; but to leave him again, when he hath brought thee, not to make use of that strength which he by his grace offers thee, this is not the affection of the spouse, when the person languisheth for the love of Christ, but it is when the love of Christ languisheth in that person, therefore if you have with David arrived to this, "*Have mercy O Lord, for I am weak,*" that an apprehension of of your own weakness hath brought you to him in a prayer for mercy and more strength, go forward with him still to his next petition, "*O Lord heal me,*" for God is always ready to build upon his own foundations, and accomplish his own beginnings.

P S A L M VII.

Verse 6. "*Arise, O Lord, in thine anger, lift up thyself, because of the rage of mine enemies.*"—David you will observe, would have God to be angry with the tyrant, not with the slave that is oppressed; with the sin, not with the soul that is intralled to it : Execrations and maledictions are not to be directed upon the
person

person, but his sin, would David provoke God who is all sweetness and mildness, to anger against any man? No, not against any man.—Every sinner is a slave to his beloved sin, and therefore how bitterly soever I curse that sin, yet I pray for that sinner, and so, as the words may be a malediction in David's mouth, we may likewise take them into our mouth, and say, Arise, O Lord, in thine anger against our enemies, our sins.

Verse 16. “ *His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate.*” God hath a way to punish the enemies of his church, with the same vengeance as they have inflicted on his church, or intended against it, according to this passage of the psalm. And this is most just with God, that the righteous law of retaliation might be turned on their own heads; how just is it, that he who breweth mischief should drink of it; this is that just retaliation our Saviour threatens in Matthew vii. If the Egyptians make a wicked decree to drown the Israelites' children, and will needs follow them into the sea to drown the parents also, 'tis just that themselves should be drowned by a memorable destruction: And thus God repays the enemies of his church, and doth many times order that the mischief they have plotted against his dearly beloved, shall recoil upon themselves as a piece overcharged, and recoiling, beats down the gunner, not him it was aimed at.

P S A L M VIII.

Verse 6. “ *Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet.*” Man has a very great dominion and sovereignty given unto him; but how have we forfeited this jurisdiction, this dominion, and what is more, our own essence; now to restore us again to our primitive sovereign powers, we shall do well to consider the dignity of our souls, which only of all other creatures is capable, or susceptible of grace; if God would bestow grace any where else, no creature could receive it but thou; thou art so necessary to God; as yet God had no utterance, no exercise, no employment for his grace and mercy but for thee; and if thou make thyself incapable of his mercy and grace, of which nothing but thou art capable, then thou destroyest thy nature; if thou depart from thy nature, that capacity of receiving grace; if thou degenerate so from man to beast, be assured, thou shalt not rest there in the state and nature of a beast, whose soul breathes out to nothing, and vanishes with the life; there is no such happiness for thee, but depend upon it, thy better nature will remain in despite of thee, thine everlasting soul must suffer everlasting torment.

P S A L M IX.

Verse 8. “ *And he shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgement to the people in uprightness.*” The judges of the earth may ab-
solve

solve the guilty, and condemn the innocent, which undoubtedly is sometimes the case :— Pilate through fear of Cæsar condemned Christ, whom the testimony of his own conscience pronounced innocent: But this judge in the text, which is our blessed Saviour, can neither be corrupted nor mistaken, whom shall he fear that is omnipotent? and what can be concealed from him who is omniscient? This judge cannot be corrupted; if he would take a bribe, thou shalt have none to give him at that day; a good conscience will do more than a full purse. “ *Riches profit not in the day of wrath; but righteousness delivereth from death.*” Proverbs xi. 4.

PSALM X.

Verse 4. “ *The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts.*” Though wicked men do not find God in their affections, yet, they often feel him in their consciences: God makes offers to wicked men, and though he be not active in all their thoughts, i. e. they do not willingly meditate and think of God, they maintain no correspondence or communion with him in their inner-man, yet God doth (like an unbidden and unwelcome guest) put himself into their thoughts, and moves in their minds; this proves their trouble, and becomes a pain unto them. As God is not far from every one of us; because in him we live, and move, and have our being; so we may say, that he is not far from
many

many wicked men; because he moves and stirs in them, he presents to their minds some manifestations of himself, in his justice, and holiness, long suffering and goodness, in none of which they accept acquaintance with him; and therefore say to God, depart from us, trouble us not; and when once they can banish those thoughts, and live thus without God in the world, then they think they live indeed; and till then they reckon their lives a kind of death.

Verse 14. "*Thou hast seen it, for thou beholdest mischief and spite to requite it with thy hand: the poor committeth himself unto thee, thou art the helper of the fatherless.*" If there be any consideration besides the cause that draws and engages God, it is the weakness of the side: God delights to help the poor; he loves to take part with the best, although the weakest side, contrary to the course of most, who when a controversy ariseth, use to stand in a kind of indifferency or neutrality, till they see which part is strongest, not which is most just: He joins with many because they are weak, not with any because they are strong; therefore he is called the helper of the fatherless: By fatherless we are to understand not only such whose fathers are dead, but any one in distress; as Christ promiseth his disciples, "*I will not leave you orphans.*" that is helpless, and as we translate it, comfortless; "*Though you are as children without a father, yet I will be a father unto you.*"—Men are often like those clouds which dissolve
into

into the sea, they send presents to the rich and assist the strong; but God sends his rain upon the dry land, and lends his strength to those that are weak.

P S A L M XI.

Verse 1. *“ In the Lord put I my trust: how say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain? —*
 In this psalm David encourageth himself in God against his enemies, and displays the providence and justice of God. When a foundation is laid in a proportion geometrical, men erect a building with safety; and the more weight is laid on, the foundation is the firmer; so where the Lord Jesus Christ is the foundation, settle thy building on him, build on him by faith, and be secure, for he is able not only to subdue all worldly and bodily enemies, but ghostly also, and by his power can deliver Satan into the chains of darkness, and can rescue out of his kingdom whom he will, and keep them, being so delivered, unto salvation. Believer, gather thyself therefore under his wings, and trust in the shadow of his feathers. Do we call acts and deeds of men security, and shall we not trust that which God has sealed and delivered to us; children rely wholly on their parents, and shall not we rely wholly on our heavenly Father: In all our extremities therefore, we must be sure to secure our faith and confidence in God, as the serpent doth her head, the foldier his shield; and this is the victory whereby we overcome the world,
 (with

(with all its allurements or affrightments) even our faith and trust in God.

Verse 2. *“ For lo, the wicked bend their bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string; that they may privily shoot at the upright in heart. ”* It is worthy our notice, that before our enemies hit us, God gives us warning that they mean to do so. When God himself is so far incensed against us that he is turned to be our enemy, and to fight against us, as in Isaiah lxiii. 10. yet still he gives us warning before-hand, and still comes a lightning before his thunder:— God comes seldom to that dispatch, a word and a blow; but to a blow without a word, to an execution without a warning, never.

PSALM XII.

Verse 1. *“ Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men. ”* In this psalm David seems destitute of human comfort, in consequence of which he craveth help of God, he confides in God’s tried promises, and comforts himself with God’s judgements on the wicked. It was said to St Peter, when thou art converted strengthen thy brethren, that, is not to engross the gifts and graces of God to himself; but to employ them to a common benefit. All christians who have tasted the sweetness of God’s graces in themselves, ought to be witnesses of the same graces of God unto others: To this end David prayed to be holpen, and saved himself, but so that he might save others; the spiritual good of those
with

with whom the righteous man liveth, is the chief employment of his prayers and pains.

Verse 6. "*The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth purified seven times.*" Promises are the foundation of faith. When the people of God are low, then let them look for their raising up; and let their low state be so far from sinking, that it should raise their faith in believing deliverance and exaltation: A low estate be assured is a great advantage for faith; faith hath surest footing when we lie prostrate upon the ground, then faith stands firmest, because there faith meets with most promises; be likewise assured the people of God have never so much of the word about them, as when they have cast off the world about them. Ministers of the gospel, as well as private christians, are in general kept low in circumstances, the reason is, that they might be kept in an humble dependant posture. The covenant sits closest to us when we are divested of the creature. When the river is at the lowest ebb, we are sure that the tide is coming in; when the days are shortest, and the winter sharpest, then the spring of mercy is at hand. The lowest downfall of the godly is usually the immediate forerunner of their advancement.

P S A L M XIII.

Verse 1. "*How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord, for ever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me.*" David complaineth here of delay in help.
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Thou poor tempted, tried, distressed soul, ever remember, delays are not denials; God's time is always best; mercy is never nearer, deliverance is at the door, when a man's heart is brought into such a frame, as to be freely willing that God should time his mercy, and time his deliverance for him, but we are ready in all our troubles, when we find not present help at hand, to suppose the Lord to be far from us; we are impatient of delay, we cannot endure to wait the Lord's leisure, we are no sooner put into the furnace of affliction, than we think God should instantly help us out; this made our prophet in the heat of affliction cry out, "*How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord, forever?*" By which we see that the children of God are wonderfully assaulted, the flesh wrestleth against the spirit and too often prevaieth, and for a time gets the upper hand. But what a comfortable assurance, that God is never far from us, however he may seem to delay and defer his help, let us learn (how great soever our afflictions be,) not to despair of God's mercy; but to consider, that however God often deferreth to help us, yet he is still present with us. It is the will and pleasure of God to try our faith, to stir up our zeal, to exercise our patience, and to teach us to make greater account of his blessings when we have obtained them.

P S A L M XIV.

Verse 2. "*The Lord looked down from heaven upon*

upon the children of men; to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. In this psalm David describeth the corruption of a natural man, he convinceth the wicked by the light of their conscience, and then glorieth in the salvation of God. The flood-gates of wickedness are open, where the door of knowledge is shut: Wickedness and ignorance grow up together: Ignorance is the mother of prophaneness, not of devotion;—therefore the psalmist joineth these together; there is none that understandeth or seeketh after God. Would you know the reason why they did not seek after God, it was because they did not understand. And in the fourth verse, “*Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge?*” As if he had said, if they had but a little knowledge among them all, they would not have devoured my people. If these trees that bring not forth good fruit are threatned with fire; I ask, what shall become of those trees whose fruit, like the vines of Sodom and Gomorrah, is as bitter as gall? If he it now burning in torments, that would not vouchsafe his crumbs to hungry Lazarus, consider seriously, what shall become of them who eat up the poor as bread? and if he must be cast into the fire, that hath not given his own goods, whither shall he be sent that hath preyed upon another mans? If he burn with the Devil that hath not clothed the naked, where thinkest thou, shall he burn that hath distressed them?

Verse 6. “*You have shamed the counsel of the*
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poor”

poor; because the Lord is his refuge." That is, ye are ashamed of it. As the godly are far from the counsels of the wicked, so the wicked are far from the counsel of the godly. By the poor, the prophet means here the godly poor, men fearing God, as it is plain by the end of the verse; you are ashamed of the counsel of the poor. Why? Because the Lord is his refuge. His counsel doth depend on the Lord; trust in the Lord, walk in his ways, shelter yourselves under his protection, this counsel our poor man gives; and he must needs be a godly man that gives this counsel; this counsel you have shunned, i. e. despised. What have we to do with this counsel, to make the Lord our refuge.

P S A L M XV.

Verse 1. "*Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?*" David in this psalm gives us a description of a citizen of Zion. We are taught from hence, that only the Lord that searcheth the heart, can put the difference between the true and the false; for this cause, the question is proposed to God. "*Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill.*"

P S A L M XVI.

Verse 3. "*But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.*"—David in distrust of merits, and hatred of idolatry, fleeth to God for preservation, he like-
wife

wife sheweth the hope of his calling, of the resurrection, and of life everlasting: All the delight of God's children should be in such as excel in virtue; we should bless their expressions, and desire their acquaintance; if they be Christs, they should be ours; which may serve to reprove them that leave Christ's friends to himself. Let a man be never so singularly endowed with the graces of God, let him be the very reflex of his image, the print of his purity, yet for his mere sanctity he is little respected; precious he may be in God's eye, but man hath no eye for him; but true christian friendship is for God's sake: For a good man will love in man nothing but God, that is the evidence of his grace.

Verse 5. *"The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot."* The prophet does not speak here so narrowly, so penuriously, as to say, God hath given me my portion, and I must look for no more; but God is my portion, and as long as he is God he hath more to give; and as long as I am his I have more to receive. Believer, never say God hath given me these and these temporal things, and I have scattered them wastefully, surely he will give me no more; these and these spiritual graces, and I have abused them, surely he will give me no more. As for God's mercy and his spiritual graces; as that language in which God spake, the Hebrew, hath no superlative; so his mercy hath no superlative; he sheweth no mercy which you can call his
C 3 greatest

greatest mercy; his mercy is never at the highest; whatsoever he hath done for thy soul, or for any others, in applying himself to it, he can exceed it.

Verse 10. “ *For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine holy One to see corruption.*” The faith of Christ here, in the resurrection of his own body to life, is spoken of prophetically, as that which bore up his spirit in the hour of death. Faith in the resurrection to life, encourageth us against all the troubles and afflictions of this life; the hope of future good is a present comfort:—For this cause we faint not, saith an apostle:—What cause was that? because we have this hope, this faith, that he which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise us up also by Jesus.—Expectations from Christ, are the cordials which keep us from fainting under our burthen and revive us in the sorrows of death itself. Now as that was Christ’s support in his sorrows and sufferings, that he should not be left in the grave, that he should not see corruption; so it is the support of saints, that though they see, yet they shall not for ever lie under the power of corruption.

P S A L M XVII.

Verse 7. “ *Shew thy marvellous loving kindness, O thou that savest by thy right hand, them which put their trust in thee, from those that rise up against them.*” God’s mercy here is manifold, and it is marvellous, therefore this sweet finger in
many

many places carries it above his judgments, above the heavens, above all his works.

Verse 14. “ *From men which are thy hand, O Lord, from men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure, &c.* Sometimes it is called God’s hand, when it is the hand of a creature. It is God’s hand in a creature’s hand: God’s hand when it is the hand of wicked men: God’s hand when it is satan’s hand. So here you see a wicked man is God’s sword, and God’s hand; for God’s hand may be understood of an instrument; and thus Satan himself may be God’s hand to punish, in that sense as wicked men are said to be his hand, from the men that are thy hand; though there be other readings of that place: Some read it, deliver me from men by thy hand; and others, deliver me from men of thy hand; but the first reading is most received.

Verse 15. “ *As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.*” One main sign and especial character of love, is to suffer for Jesus the father of suffering, and king of the afflicted:—Therefore the royal prophet saith here, I am well pleased when I shall behold myself marked with the character of thy sufferings. Jesus Christ, in the great sacrifice of patience made in the beginning of ages, supplies the person of a great bishop, putting on flesh wholly imprinted with dolours, an heart drenched in acerbities, a tongue steeped in gall. Round about

him are all the most elevated and courageous souls, who all wear his livery, and both constantly and gloriously dispose themselves to this great model and pattern of sorrows:— Friends, suffering is our trade, our vow, our profession; our souls are engaged by oath to this warfare, when we first enter into christianity. Love which cannot suffer, is not love; and if it cease to love when it should suffer, it never was what it professed.

P S A L M XVIII.

Verse 2. “ *The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer: my God, my strength, in whom I will trust, my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.*” David in this psalm praiseth God for his manifold and marvellous blessings. In all this inventory, in all this armory and furniture of the church, there is never a sword, no material sword in the church’s hand: The primitive church fought with nothing but prayers and tears, and with this artillery they did lay siege to, and take even heaven itself.

Verse 25. “ *With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful, with an upright man thou wilt shew thyself upright.*” But doth the Lord take colour from every one he meets, or change his temper as the company changes? That is the weakness of sinful man; he cannot do so, with whom there is no variableness nor shadow of changing: Immutability being one of the essential attributes of his deity. God is pure
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and upright with the unclean and hypocritical, as well as with the pure and upright ; and his actions shew him to be so, God shews himself froward with the froward, when he deals with them as he hath said he will deal with the froward, deny them and reject them. God shews himself pure with the pure, when he deals with them as he hath said he will, hear them, and accept them. Though there be nothing in our purity and sincerity which deserveth mercy, yet we cannot expect mercy without them: Our comforts are not grounded upon our graces, but our comforts are the fruits and consequents of our graces.

Verse 37. “ *I have pursued mine enemies, and overtaken them: neither did I turn again till they were consumed.*” He that makes half repentances, makes none ; David places the consummation of his victory in this, “ *I have pursued mine enemies, &c.*” God requires a pursuing of the enemy ; a search for the sin ; and not to stay till an officer, that is a sickness, or any other calamity light upon that sin, and so bring it before us : God requires an overtaking of the enemy, that we be not weary in the search of our consciences, and God requires a consuming of the enemy, not a weakening only, a dislodging and dispossessing of a sin, and the profit of that sin ; but all the profit, and all the pleasure of all the body of sin. For he that is sorry with a godly sorrow, he that confesses with a deliberate detestation, he that satisfies with a full restitution of all his sins, but one ;
that

that man is in no better case, then if at sea he should stop all leaks but one, and perish by that. If thou wilt be discharged, cancel all thy bonds; one chain till broke, holds as fast as ten.

P S A L M XIX.

Verse 6. “ *His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it : and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.*” As David saith of the sun of the firmament, the father of nature, there is nothing hid from the heat thereof. So we may say of the Son of God, the Father of the faithful, in a higher sense than Abraham was so called, there is nothing hid from him; no place, no person excluded from the benefit of his death. The Son hath paid, the Father hath received enough for all, not in single money only for the discharge of thy lesser debts, thy idle words, thy wanton thoughts, thy unchaste looks ; but in massy talents to discharge thy crying debts, the clamours of those poor whom thou hast oppressed, and thy thundering debts, those blasphemies by which thou hast torn that Father that made thee, that Son that redeemed thee, that Holy Ghost that would comfort thee.

Verse 12. “ *Who can understand his errors ? cleanse thou me from secret faults.*” When we have passed many scrutinies, many inquisitions, of the conscience, we can never get beyond the necessity of this petition, Lord cleanse me from my secret sins: We shall ever be guilty of sins
which

which we shall forget, not only because they are so little, but because they are so great; that which should be compunction, will be consternation; and the anguish which out of a natural tenderness of conscience, we should have at the first entering into those sins, will make us dispute on the sins side; and for some present ease and to give our heavy soul breath, we will find excuse for them; and at last slide and wear into a customary practice of them; and though we cannot be ignorant that we do them, yet we shall be ignorant that they are sins, but rather make them things indifferent, or recreations necessary to maintain a cheerfulness, and so to sin on; by which means, we shall never be able to shut our mouths against this petition, cleanse me from my secret faults; for though the sin be manifest, the various circumstances that aggravate the sin will be secret.

P S A L M XX.

Verse 7. *“Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the Lord our God.”* This teacheth us to live by faith at all times, especially in dangers, still looking beyond the means; neither must we reject the means; for God giveth means for our good, means then must be used, but not trusted in; as here the prophet condemns not the use of chariots and horses, but the trust and confidence in them: We must stand in, and fix upon the means as our helpers, but in the name of the Lord; who affords both them, and success in them;

them; hence it is that God many times works his greatest works by weakest means; that the means might be as a glass through which we might behold the brightness of his power and majesty.

Verse 8. “ *They are brought down and fallen, but we are risen, and stand upright.*” We must not weigh God with leaden, or iron, or stone weights; how much land, or metal, or riches he gives one man more than another, but how much grace in the use of these, or how much patience in the want, or in the loss of these we have above others.

P S A L M XXI.

Verse 4. “ *He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him, even length of days for ever and ever.*”— In regard that God’s dearest children are cut off many times in the flower of their years; how doth God make good this promise to those that are his? I answer, God in such cases makes his word good, instead of a less good he giveth a better, a greater; for suppose thou comest to a landed man, and dealest with him for some term of years in a farm; and when the deeds come to be drawn, he maketh over to thee, the fee simple of a manor; even so deals the Lord here. The king, saith the psalmist; God promised long life; and for the lease of that life of some few years continuance, he bestoweth a perpetuity; instead of a miserable long life here, he giveth a blessed and eternal life hereafter; which may teach us to suspend our
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cenſures, in regard of thoſe that are taken away from us, and not to juſtify ourſelves, becauſe we ſurvive and eſcape, when others periſh; they may go for the better, and we be reſerved for worſe matters; to ſee and ſuffer that miſery which they are taken away from.

Verſe 9. *“Thou ſhalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger; the Lord ſhall ſwallow them up in his wrath, and the fire ſhall devour them.”* Jeſus Chriſt the lord of life and glory always had, hath, and ſhall have enemies, either openly fitting, or ſecretly plotting againſt his church; but herein lieth our comfort, that they ſhall at length be all deſtroyed; and this deſtruction is commonly ſet forth by moſt hot, burning, and tormenting fire: Wherefore let us patiently wait upon him, whatever we in the interim ſuffer at their hands; and let all the enemies of the truth be diſmayed, and whenſoever they think upon the miſchief they intend againſt God’s church, let them alſo think on that judgment God intends againſt them.

P S A L M XXII.

Verſe 2. *“O my God, I cry in the day-time, but thou beareſt not; and in the night-ſeaſon, and am not ſilent.”* The not enjoying what we deſire, whets our affections, and makes us more eager in the purſuit, and the gift more welcome at the receipt: For uſually what is hardly got is greatly ſet by: And thus the child of God prays ſometimes on his knees, ſometimes on his

his face, and that with sighs which cannot be uttered; and yet God seems not to regard. — O my God, says David here, I have cried in the morning, and at night, but thou hearest not. What then is the Lord's hand shortned, that it cannot save? No, but our iniquities do separate between us and our God. Sometimes we ask we know not what, with the sons of Zebedee; sometimes we ask with doubting and wavering; and sometimes we ask amiss, that we may consume it upon our lusts; lastly, sometimes, nay, almost always, we have roving and ranging thoughts, and so no marvel if we receive not. *Quomodo te audiri a deo postulas, cum te ipse non audies*; how canst thou expect that God should hear thee, when thou dost not hear thyself.

Verse 3. "*But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.*" It argues much strength of grace, when we maintain high thoughts of God, and settled resolves that he is good; when he not only lets us fall low into trouble, but lets us lie unheard in the day of our trouble. Such was the strength of David's faith, or rather of Christ's, of whose sufferings this psalm is a prophecy; who as soon as he said, "*O my God, I cry in the day time but thou hearest not,*" adds in the next verse, "*But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.*" as if he had said, I will not have an evil, or an uncomely thought of thee, though thou refusest to hear, I know thou art holy, and there-
fore

fore canst not but be just and good, whatsoever thou art pleased to do with me.

Verse 4. "*Our fathers trusted in thee ; they trusted, and thou didst deliver them.*" It is wisdom to look at the carriage of the godly in former times; our fathers trusted in thee; and to look upon their patient dependance on God, doubling their diligence in calling on him; as their difficulties increased, they cried, they trusted: and to remember that they did never seek God in vain, but every one of them were delivered and not confounded: For this direction is held forth to us in this example of Christ and David.

P S A L M XXIII.

Verse 1. "*The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.*" In the midst of our greatest miseries and afflictions our interest in God will be our comfort. Ask David, and he will tell us in that psalm, that seeing the Lord is his shepherd he shall not want any good thing, even then when things go never so ill with him. In his sorrows he shall have consolation, in his dangers, preservation; supply in his wants, both spiritual and temporal; safety in his ways, and whatever may be meet for him in any estate that may befall him.

Verse 4. "*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil : for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.*" See here believers, what a faithful God you have to stand by you, one that

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will

will not fail in greatest need: No such trial of a friend as in time of trouble; but here many times friends will not, and sometimes they cannot help; the case is sometimes so desperate, that the society of friends can only afford pity, not succour; they may look on, they cannot take off; but the presence of God is ever active and powerful; and whereas most faithful friends part at death, this friend will not then leave us:—David knew he would be with him in the shadow of death; not only when we walk through the pleasant meadow of prosperity, but when we go through the salt waters of affliction; nay, when we pass through mare mortuum, the sea of death, he will be with us.

Verse 5. “*Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil, my cup runneth over.*” In the most present dangers, God shews the most present help; thou shalt spread my table in the very face of my enemies, even then, when my enemy is nearest, and looketh on: As when the sword is in the hand of the angel, so when it is in the hand of man, a thousand shall fall on thy right hand, yet it shall not come nigh thee: What, doth it not come nigh him, when they die on every side of him? yes, nigh him, but not nigh to hurt him; the power of God can bring us near to danger, and yet keep us far from harm: Yet we are not to take this, or the like holy writs of protection, as if God will deliver all his people from famine or the sword: No, for the
Lord

Lord knows how to distinguish his, when famine and sword do not. If God's servants are not delivered from famine and sword, they are delivered by them; and while they are overcome by one trouble, they conquer all.

P S A L M XXIV.

Verse 1. "*The earth is the Lords, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.*" The Devil told our Saviour that all was his, and to whomsoever he would he gave it, Luke iv. But the Devil lied in saying so; for it is God alone that is the sole proprietor of the whole world; he only can truly say, I rule in the kingdom of men, and give it to whomsoever I will; how then can God do any man wrong, who is obliged to none, but all are indebted to him for all they have. And again, how can God's children want any thing that is good for them, seeing they have so rich a father, who seems to say unto them as in Gen. xlv. Regard not your stuff, for all the good of the land is yours.

Verse 4. "*He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lift up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.*" God looketh not, neither would he have us to look upon external titles, or outward state, but upon the uprightness of the heart. When David was anointed 1. Sam. xvi. Samuel was ready to pour the anointing oil upon Eliab, the eldest brother, because as the text says, he was a goodly man. Not so says God, look not upon his countenance.

nance. Abel offered, so did Cain; but God rejected the offering of Cain; because he offered not with an upright heart. The upright man is the first ingredient into that holy mountain. And indeed, what part of man is more fit for God than that, which God himself shall choose, and that is the heart: My son give me thy heart, not the eye, though it be piercing; nor the foot, though it be swift; nor the hand, though it be strong; nor the tongue, though it be eloquent; nor the head, though it be politic; but the heart, an upright heart; he that hath an upright heart, shall ascend into his holy mountain.

P S A L M XXV.

Verse 11. "*For thy names sake O Lord, pardon mine iniquity: for it is great.*" It is well noted upon these words of David, for thy names sake, O Lord, that the word is Elohim, which is Gods, or Lords in the plural: For David, though he conceived not divers Gods, yet he knew three in one, and one in three; and he knew that by the sin which he lamented here, he had offended all those three. For whereas we consider principally in the Father, power; and in the Son, wisdom; and in the Holy Ghost, goodness; David had sinned against the Father, in his notion, in abusing his power and kingly authority to a mischievous and bloody end in the murder of Uriah; and he had sinned against the Son in his notion, in depraving and distorting true wisdom into craft and treachery; and

and he had sinned against the Holy Ghost in his notion, when he would not be content with the goodness and piety of Uriah; who refused to take the comforts of his own house, as long as God himself in his army lodged in tents, and stood in the face of his enemy.

Verse 16. “*Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me: for I am desolate and afflicted.*” Although a christian may be grown up to such a strength of devotion, as that he can boldly go to God in supplications, and intercessions, and thanksgivings, yet, at first, when he comes first to deprehend himself in a particular sin, or in a course of sin, he comes bashfully, shamefully, tremblingly; he knows not what to ask, he is afraid to ask any particular thing at God’s hand: but although he be not come yet to particular requests for pardon of past sins, nor for strength against future, nor to a particular consideration of the weight of his sins, nor to a comparison betwixt his sin and the mercy of God; yet he comes to a *miserere mei Domine*, to a sudden ejaculation, O Lord, be merciful unto me, how dare I do this in the sight of my God.

P S A L M XXVI.

Verse 3. “*For thy loving kindness is before mine eyes: and I have walked in thy truth.*” David provokes God with all those emphatical words, prove me, try me, examine me; and more, bring not only a candle to search me, but even fire to melt me; but upon what confidence all

this? for thy loving kindness is ever before mine eyes: If God's anger, and not his loving kindness had been before his eyes, it had been a fearful apparition, and a dangerous issue to have gone upon; therefore it was not God's searching, and trying, and correcting of him, that David deprecates here; but that anger which might change the nature of all, and make all the physic, poison; all that which was intended for David's mollifying, to advance his obduration.

Verse 5. "*I have hated the congregation of evil doers: and will not sit with the wicked.*" There is nothing that more discovereth what lieth in the heart, than the company with whom we ordinarily resort. The heart of man is deceitful, and the secret corners thereof are past finding out; but the company which we keep shall try what is in it. If the heart be set upon goodness, we will not incline ourselves to any lewd conversation: The prophet David hereby justified his heart, in that he hated the company of evil persons; which may serve to reprove all such as are the companions of the prophane: The crouding ourselves into such company, argues a conformity in affections.—We see in the course of nature, that like will to like; and if they be not made like unto them, and corrupted by them, it is greatly to be feared they will be so.

PSALM XXVII.

Verse 3. "*Though an host should encamp against*

gainst me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident." Strange, but yet strong was the faith of the psalmist in this verse. See here a soul like the ark rising with the waters: The encamping of an host is terrible, and yet David fears not; the rising of war is yet more dangerous, yet David will not only not fear, but be confident; nor yet doth he say in God, but in this, that is, in the very war itself will I be confident; as knowing that when the enemy did not only encamp about, but war against me; (so that either he must perish, or God must help) it would not be long ere the wisdom of the Almighty would find out a way to rescue him. Not much unlike this, is that resolution of holy Job, "*Though he slay me, yet will I put my trust in him.*" Death and hope seem to be at the greatest distance, and yet here they are brought together; death could not kill Job's hope:—Death itself giveth life to his hope, and becomes a prop to his confidence.

Verse 4. "*One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple.*"—To this note David sets his harp in many psalms. Sometimes that God had suffered his enemies to possess his tabernacle, as psalm lxxviii. "*He forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh.*" But most commonly he complained that God disabled him from coming to the sanctuary: In which one thing he sums up all his desires,
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all his prayers in this psalm; to this end he expresses an holy jealousy, a religious envy, even to the sparrows and swallows (yea the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, even thy altars, my King and my God) thou art my King and my God; and yet excludest me from that which thou affordest to sparrows.

Verse 8. "*When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.*" From this verse you may know how to judge of yourselves in the time of hearing, whether the word be mixt with faith; if your hearts answer God's word as David's did; when God said, "*seek ye my face,*" he answered, "*Thy face, Lord, will I seek,*" for faith is such an assent to every word of God, as it produceth affections and actions answerable to the word whereunto the heart assenteth: So that when John Baptist preached repentance, we grieve in the sense of sin; and when Christ preacheth the gospel, we are comforted in hope of forgiveness. Hereby are condemned such, who are like those proud men who told Jeremiah that he spoke falsely, when he delivered the word of God, which crossed their purposes; as also such as despair in time of affliction, and do not live by faith.

PSALM XXVIII.

Verse 2. "*Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry unto thee: when I lift up my hands towards thy holy oracle.*" He mentioneth the
lifting

lifting up of his hands, as a sign of his seeking help only from God; which reproveth the remissness of too many in praying, who lift up no hands, nor make any outward expression; surely it sheweth a dead heart; and yet if this be done in hypocrisy, it availeth not, for with the hands the heart must be lifted up, that we may prevail.

Verse 8. “ *The Lord is their strength, and he is the saving strength of his anointed.*” By this all power is ascribed unto Christ, to save at all times, all such as believe in him, to their assured comfort. And of David learn we likewise, when we pray, and when we have victory over our enemies, to ascribe the power to him alone, and not to ourselves; looking upon Christ also, though despised by the Jews as weak and unable to save himself, as being of all power most able to save both temporally and eternally.

PSALM XXIX.

Verse 9. “ *The voice of the Lord maketh the binds to calve, and discovereth the forests : and in his temple doth every one speak of his glory.*” God is worthy of all praise and honour; not only when he doth enrich and strengthen us, but also when he doth impoverish and weaken us. When God thunders in judgments so loud; that he breaketh the cedars, and shakes the wilderness; then to give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name, argues a spirit highly enobled and glorious in grace. Therefore the
children

children of God should not rest in this, that they bear afflictions, but they should labour to bring their hearts to bless and glorify God in, and for the afflictions that they bear. And a soul that thus honoureth God, shall assuredly receive honour from God. That which the apostle speaks of the saints suffering persecution, is true of them in any kind of holy suffering, the spirit of glory and of God doth rest upon them.

Verse 11. *“The Lord will give strength unto his people, the Lord will bless his people with peace.”* Peace is one of the greatest temporal blessings that a state or church can receive, and therefore the prophet calls it here not barely peace, but blessing of peace; and doubtless it is to teach the world, that all earthly blessings are as it were unblest till peace be upon them, till then no enjoying of any; therefore it was an ancient custom among the Jews, to salute them to whom they wished all happiness, with this compliment, peace be unto you. For indeed without peace we can have no solid temporal happiness. Peace, or nothing: Peace, and every thing.

P S A L M XXX.

Verse 5. *“For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.”* David doth not say it must endure for a night; that God will by no means shorten the time, perchance God will wipe away all tears from
thine

thine eyes at midnight, if thou pray, try him that way then: If he do not, if weeping do endure for a night, all night, yet joy cometh in the morning: and then the prophet doth not say, joy may come in the morning, but it cometh certainly, infallibly it comes, and comes in the morning: God is an early riser for the good of his children; and therefore if God should at any time leave us in an Egypt or a Babylon, under any affliction without relief for a season; we may proceed to David's holy importunity, "*O Lord make haste to help me, satisfy us early with thy mercy, Psalm. xc. 14. that we may be glad and rejoice all our days,*" and God will do so.

Verse 6. "*And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved.*" As the body of man and consequently health, is best understood, and best advanced by dissections, and anatomies, when the hand and knife of the surgeon hath passed upon every part of the body, and laid it open; So when the hand or sword of God hath pierced our soul, we are brought to a better knowledge of ourselves, than any degree of prosperity would have raised us to. David here was an example of this in the time of the law, who first said in his prosperity he should never be moved; but when, said he, thou hidest thy face from me, I was troubled, and then I cried unto thee, O Lord! then, but not till then. The same art, the same grammar continues still; and Peter is an example of the same rule in the time of grace, who was at first so confident

confident as to come to that, if all forsook him, if he must die for him, yet he was ready; and yet without any terror from an armed magistrate, without any surprisal of a subtle examiner, upon the question of a poor maid he denied his master, but then the bitterness of his soul, taught him another temper afterwards.

P S A L M XXXI.

Verse 3. “ *For thou art my rock and my fortress, therefore for thy names sake lead me, and guide me.* ” How imperfect, how weak soever our prayers be, yet still, if it be a prayer, it hath a reason upon which it is grounded: For that prayer is very far from faith which is not made with reason, with a consideration of some possibility and some conveniency in Christ. Every man that says, Lord, Lord, enters not into heaven: A prayer must be with a serious purpose to pray, or else the fashionable and customary prayers are but false fires without shot, they batter not heaven; it is but an interjection that slips in, it is but a parenthesis that might be left out.

Verse 11. “ *I was a reproach among all mine enemies, but especially among my neighbours, and a fear to mine acquaintance, they that did see me without, fled from me.* ” The alienation of friends is a very great increase of our sorrow in times of sorrow: Hence David complains here, “ *I was a reproach,* ” &c. The prophet speaks here of three sorts. First, enemies, secondly, neighbours, and thirdly, acquaintance. That his
enemies

enemies reproach him was a trouble to him, yet the least of his troubles; the thing which most troubled him was, that his neighbours reproached him, and that his acquaintance were afraid of him; he was a fear to his acquaintance; not that they were afraid he would do them any hurt, but they were afraid to own him, or to do him any good: And this was the ground of David's complaint, the abatement of his friends' love: For as their unkindness lessens our comforts in good times, so it adds to our sorrow in evil times.

Verse 16. "*Make thy face to shine upon thy servant: save me for thy mercies sake.*" God will deliver my soul, God will save me for his mercies sake, that is, because his mercy is engaged in it; and if God were to sell me this deliverance, this saving, and all that I pray for; what could I offer him so great as his own mercy, in which I offer him the obedience, the innocency, the blood of his only son. If I buy the king's land, I must pay for it in the king's money, I have no mine or mint of my own, therefore if I would have any thing of God, I must give him that which is his own for it, i. e. his mercy; and this is to give God his mercy, to give God thanks for his mercy, to give all to his mercy; and to acknowledge that if my works be acceptable to him, nay, if my very faith be acceptable to him, it is not because my works, no, nor my faith have any proportion of equivalency in them, or are worth the least flash of joy, or the least spangle of glory in heaven:—

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But because God in his mercy, only of his mercy, merely for the glory of his mercy, hath passed such a covenant, believe this, and do this, and thou shalt live; not for thy deeds sake, no, nor for thy faiths sake, but for his mercies sake.

Verse 19. “ *O how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee, before the sons of men.*” Fathers lay up for their children, and how marvellous, says David, is that goodness which the Lord hath laid up for his children, even before the sons of men; and no wonder, for he that spared not his own son, but gave him up for us, how should he not but with him give us all things. Are the children of God in want; the Lord is ready to relieve them; and rather than they shall lack, the stoney rock shall yield them waters, the heavens shall rain quails and manna, the poor widow shall relieve Elijah, and the ravens shall feed him: Are they in danger and distress, the angels shall become their guard; and pitch their tents about them: Are they sick, the Lord will make their bed in their sickness: Are they in sorrow and heaviness, behold their heavenly Father is the Father of all mercies, and God of all consolation.

P S A L M XXXII.

Verse 1. “ *Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.*” But what is blessedness, any more than a confident expectation

tion of happiness in the next world: Yes, blessedness includes all that can be asked or conceived in the next world, and in this too.—Christ in his sermon of blessedness says, first, “*Blessed are they, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven,*” and after “*blessed are they, for they shall inherit the earth.*” Remission of sins is blessedness; and as godliness hath the promise of this world and the next, so blessedness hath the performance of both. He that hath peace in the remission of sins is blessed already, and shall have those blessings infinitely multiplied in the world to come.

P S A L M XXXIII.

Verse 15. “*He fashioneth their hearts alike; he considereth all their works.*” As a suit of cloaths is fitted to a man’s body; so doth God fashion a good man’s heart to his estate, and makes it suitable, fit, and convenient for him, and this affords him content. When there is an unsuitableness, a disproportion, or a disagreement betwixt a man’s mind and his means, he can have no satisfaction, no comfort, as we see by Ahab, and Haman, and divers others; who wanted for no means; yet because their hearts did not agree with their estates, see how discontentedly they lived and died. If then thy estate be not according to thy mind, desire of God to fit thy mind to thy estate, then thou shalt be contented in it, be it more or less. It is as easy for God to give a man plenty as poverty, only he sees the one more convenient

nient for some men than the other, and he dispenseth his favours accordingly.

Verse 18. “ *Behold the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him : upon them that hope in his mercy.*” There is an observing eye, the eye of God’s knowledge, which is upon all men, so much is affirmed, verse 13. But his preserving eye, the eye of his care, is only upon his righteous ones that fear him. Their eye is upon him in duty, as the eye of the handmaid is upon her mistress to serve her: his eye is upon them in mercy, as the eye of the owner is upon the cattle to feed them. Such is for the most part the love of parents to their children when young, that they cannot endure them out of their sight, but would always have their own eye upon them; no less is the fatherly affection of God towards his people, whom he adopts for his children, and keepeth ever in his sight.

Verse 21. “ *For our heart shall rejoice in him : because we have trusted in his holy name.*” God will always do for them that depend on him, or else what would be done to his great and glorious name: How would the enemy insult, and the godly hang down their head, or how would any be bold to cast themselves upon him in future. In their pressures they may resolve with David in the words above cited. Wouldst thou, O christian, find shelter or sanctuary in a storm, and a city of refuge against the pursuer; in a word, when the heavens shall be on fire about thine ears, wouldst thou be able to
look

look upon the Son of Man? let the Lord be thy reliance, and the most high thy confidence.

PSALM XXXIV.

Verse 8. "*O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.*" The brightest noon had a faint twilight or break of day: The sight of God which we shall have in heaven, must have a break of day here. If we will see his face there, we must see it in some beams here first; and to that purpose every sense is called sight: For there is taste, and see, and smell, and see what a favour of life the Lord is. So St John, Revel. 1. Turned about to see a voice, there hearing was sight, and so Christ says in Luke xxiv. Feel and see, there feeling is seeing: All things concur to this seeing; and therefore in all the works of your senses and all your faculties see the Lord. Hear him in his word, and so see him; speak to him in your prayers, and so see him; touch him in his sacrament, and so see him; present holy and religious actions unto him, and so see him. Thus here, taste and see how good the Lord is, and thence long after him: For as he that tastes honey to be sweet, needs no argument to persuade him to believe it: So here let a man but once taste that the Lord is good, and he will thenceforth condemn all the fooleries of the world as tasteless, and as a new born babe desire the sincere milk of the word, 1. Pet. ii.

Verse 19. "*Many are the afflictions of the righteous:*"

teous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all."

Art thou righteous: arm thyself to bear brunts and blows like a soldier, but fear not victory so long as God is near thee, and thou near him, put on patience, and seek not to prevent troubles by laying aside integrity and a good conscience. This is the condition of divine protection, 1. Pet. iii. 13. Let us therefore trust ourselves with God in troubles as well as peace, expecting the accomplishment of this gracious promise. If thou art righteous, the number of crosses shall not foil thee: nor the power of persecutors daunt thee, nor the continuance of trials break thee; nothing but sin can hinder thy deliverance. Be humbled for sin, and all shall be well.

P S A L M XXXV.

Verse 5. "*Let them be as chaff before the wind: and let the angel of the Lord chase them.*" Angels are mighty in power; and not only good but evil angels receiving permission or commission from God, can scatter the wicked as stubble before the wind: as stubble, to shew how easy the wicked are dissipated, and how quickly they are carried away. Stubble makes little opposition against the wind, the war is not great between the wind and the straw, between the chaff and the storm: Stubble and chaff are as much a match for winds and storms, as the wicked are for the wrath of God; therefore when David saw his enemies deserted of God, notwithstanding their seeming devotion, and earnestness

earnestness in calling to him for help, he presently adds, then did I beat them small as the chaff before the wind. Psalm xi. It is an easy matter to destroy those whom God refuseth to help, and to make them as chaff, whose rock the Lord refuseth to be. Every man is but dust and chaff, easily carried away in regard of his natural constitution. Lastly, chaff driven before the wind may rest against a wall; but where shall the ungodly appear, 1. Peter? iv. surely no where: Not before the saints and angels; for holiness is their trade; not before God, for he is of more pure eyes; nor, lastly, before Christ, for he shall come in flaming fire, rendering vengeance on his enemies.

Verse 18. "*I will give thee thanks in the great congregation: I will praise thee among much people.*" I can build a church in my bosom, and can serve God in my heart, and never clothe my prayer in words. God is often said to hear and answer in scripture, when they to whom he speaks have said nothing. I can build a church at my bed side; when I prostrate myself in humble prayer there, I do so. I can praise God cheerfully in my chapel, in every congregation will I bless the Lord.

PSALM XXXVI.

Verse 6. "*Thy righteousness is like the great mountains; thy judgements are a great deep: O Lord, thou preservest man and beast.*" We are assured of a twofold salvation by the intercession of Christ. First, of a temporal salvation from trouble

troubles and outward evils: Secondly, of an eternal salvation from sin and condemnation. Therefore, saith St Paul “ *We both labour and and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe.*” The living God is the Saviour of all men, yea, he saveth man and beast by his general providence; but he saveth believers by an act of special providence; and therefore they are ready not only to do their utmost for him, but to venture the loss of all for him, who loveth them above other men; and therefore they will venture more for God than other men will do.

P S A L M XXXVII.

Verse 1. “ *Fret not thyself because of evil doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.*” It is some trouble to good men to see evil men flourish and live free from trouble.—Many a good man hath had much ado to digest this morsel, and get above this temptation. While David admonisheth, fret not thyself because of the wicked man, he more than intimates, that the best of men are ready to fret and envy, when they prosper: and either he or Asaph tells us how he found it working on his own spirit, and he staid not here, but was so overborne by the strength of this temptation, as to make a very unbecoming and dangerous conclusion, and we are informed, he could not get out of it till he went into the sanctuary of God, i. e. till he consulted with God, and then

then, and not till then, he understood the end of these men.

Verse 3. "*Trust in the Lord, and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.*" That confidence is not a spiritual rest but a carnal security, which hopes in the promise, and yet obeyeth not the precept. Very observable therefore is David's exhortation here, and his assertion elsewhere; his assertion Psalm lii. concerns himself, "*I am like a green olive tree, then I trust the more in God;*" intimating, that the lamp of his confidence was fed with the oil of good works; his exhortation is to others in this verse, trust in the Lord and do good, implying, that a right trust in God stimulates us in doing good, and a sedulous doing good emboldeneth to trust in God; so that these two not only may, but must meet together in every real child of God.

Verse 5. "*Commit thy way unto the Lord: trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass.*" Abraham when he beat the price with God from fifty to ten, rolled his petition upon God: It is in the margin, not commit, but roll; so roll thy ways upon him, come to him in a thankful acknowledgement of what he hath done for thee in nature and grace; and then as it follows, trust in him, and he shall bring it to pass.—Begin at Alpha and he shall bring it to Omega: consider thyself but in the state of hope, and ipse faciet, saith the text, God shall do, God shall work; there is no more in the original but so, ipse faciet, not God shall do it, or do
this

this, or do that, but do all ; do but consider what God hath done for thee, and he shall do all.

Verse 24. "*Though he fall he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.*" It was of Solomon, say some interpreters, that David his father prophesied in this text; if sensible grace, yet not final grace was taken from that beloved of God : in the hardest of this winter, the sap went down to the root, though it appeared not in the branches. Even while Solomon removed, that word stood fast, he shall be my son, and I will be his father. He that foresaw his sin, threatned and limited his correction, "*If he break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit his transgression with a rod, and his iniquity with stripes.*"

Verse 26. "*He is ever merciful, and lendeth: and his seed is blessed.*" Merciful as his Father in heaven is merciful, i. e. in perpetual, not transitory endowments (for God did not set up his lights, his sun and his moon for a day, but for ever, and such should our light, our good works be) He is merciful and he lendeth: To whom? to the poor he giveth, he looks for no return from them; for they are the waters upon which he casts his bread: Yet he lendeth "*He that hath pity on the poor lendeth to the Lord,*" Pro. xix. and then as David adds there, his seed is blessed. Blessed in this which follows there, that he shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever; the righteous shall be held in everlasting remembrance.

Verse

Verse 35. "*I have seen the wicked in great power: and spreading himself like a green bay-tree.*"—In this and the next verse, David records his own experience of the wicked, and from thence encourageth us to observe our own experience of the good: thereby intimating to us, that as the way of the just and unjust is directly opposite, so their end shall be manifestly contrary; and withal, that what he saw in his time might be observed, and should be made good in the experience of all times: God is the same, yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. The same not only in his essence, but in his operation, in his being, but in his working; what he hath done, that he still does and will do. Divine Providence ever acts like itself; and though it vary in particular circumstances, yet ever keepeth the general course of rewarding every one at last according to his works: therefore former experiences are just grounds of future confidence; those dispensations of God towards the righteous, and the wicked, which holy men of old have registered, may encourage us to expect the same: to which end David in verse 37, calls upon us to mark and behold.

Verse 37. "*Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.*" A fair day may have a foul evening: but a good life cannot have a bad death. Such as the premises are, such will the conclusion be. Old Hilarton when he lay a dying bespake his soul in this manner, "*Get thee out of me, O my soul;*
get

get thee out of me, why fearest thou, that hast served God almost these seventy years." And indeed what reason hath such a soul to fear, when the end of that man is peace. It is true, the beginning and middle of the upright man's days may be full of trouble, but his end is rest. The life of a saint is a continual warfare with Satan's temptations, his own corruptions, and the world's persecutions; but at his death he shall enter into peace; for the present none under worse slavery than the good, but at the last there shall be a year of jubilee. It is not unworthy our observation, that the Hebrews use this word in the text to signify both a reward and an end, thereby intimating to us, that the reward is not given till the end: when the evening was come, then the labourers received their wages, and at the end of our lives shall be the collation of our recompence.

P S A L M XXXVIII.

Verse 8. *"I am feeble and sore broken; I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart."*—As God dealt here with David, just so likewise deals he with all his servants: he humbles them and brings them down by misery and affliction, that so he may bring them home to himself. Thus also Christ, who in his human nature had received from his Father all judgment and power, and dominion over this world, did receive all this upon the condition he should govern after this manner, *"Thou shalt bruise them with a rod of iron, and break them in pieces like*

like a potters vessel." Now God meant well to the nations.

Verse 11. "*My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore: and my kinsmen stand afar off.*" David's friends came near enough to him, when he was (as we may say) in a whole skin, or in a good condition: but when sores were upon him (he means it not of sores upon his flesh, but of sores in a metaphor, troubles in his estate,) then, as if his sore had been a plague sore, they stood afar off; and this must have been a great trouble to David, and that upon a double consideration. First, because it is probable those friends that were such friends to him now, were formerly obliged by received courtesies; and, secondly, because they obliged themselves by promised courtesies. It doth not trouble us much to see them discourteous to us, who never received courtesie from us, or to see them unwilling to do us a kindness, who never promised any: But when we see our courtesies lost upon any man, or him sitting loose to us, notwithstanding all his own promises, this goes to the heart, and cuts deep: an unexpected cross is not so grievous unto us, as the crossing our expectation.

P S A L M XXXIX.

Verse 9. "*I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it.*" There is a silence that is not always good, but occasionally and circumstantially, and this a forbearing to speak truth. which may be good then, when our speaking

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of

of truth can do no good, and may do harm. Which was David's case in this verse; though it were a vexation to him, though he had a sense and a remorse, that this was some degree of prevarication, to abandon the defence of God's honour at any time; yet his religious discretion made it appear to him, that this present abstinence would in the end conduce more to God's glory. It was the wise man's rule, "*Kindle not the coals of sinners, when thou rebukest them; lest thou be burnt in the flames of their sins.*"

Verse 5. "*Behold thou hast made my days as an hand-breadth, and mine age is as nothing before thee: verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity.*" David was here too prodigal in his similitude, when he beat out the age of man to the dimensions of a span; an inch, a punctum had been bountiful enough: the least atom types out his glory here, his glory of life here: 'tis breath on steel, no sooner on than off, sun-burnt stubble, at once flame and ashes.

P S A L M XL.

Verse 8. "*I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea thy law is within my heart.*" Life and profession together make a christian; who must not have his ears only opened to hear Christ's will, but his heart and hand ready to do it.—We must join with our profession, practice; with our hearing, doing; with our faith, virtue; with our shew of godliness, the power of it in our lives; with our knowledge of God the ser-
vice

vice of him; with a calling of Abraham, father, a doing of the works of Abraham. Professors of the gospel should have their conversation as becomes the gospel. But if with the Jews, we cry the temple of the Lord, but obey not the Lord of the temple; if our voice be Jacob's but our hands Esau's; if we run towards heaven one day, towards hell fix, and contradict the truth of those sermons we hear, by the error of our lives, this is to profess a christian, but to live a pagan; with the barren fig-tree in the gospel, to have the leaves of outward profession, but want the fruits of an holy conversation; and therefore, with that fig-tree, such men shall be cursed for flourishing.

P S A L M XLI.

Verse 3. *“ The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.”* That you may obtain mercy from God, shew mercy to others. It is a sweet promise to feed on in the time of sickness, this of the psalmist. That bed must needs be easy which God maketh, nor can he faint whom God strengtheneth: but to whom is this promise made? him, and none but him, who considereth the poor, so is our translation; but the Hebrew word may as well be rendered sick, one that is weakned by disease; he who considers others in their sickness, shall be supported by God in his. Which of us doth not desire that God would shew mercy to him in his distress. But how can we expect God

should grant that to us, which we deny to others: Blessed are the merciful, saith Christ, for they shall receive mercy: be then, O man, to thyself a pattern of mercy, and shew with that speed, and in that degree, mercy to thy sick, weak, languishing neighbour, which thou wouldst have God vouchsafe to thee in the like condition.

P S A L M XLII.

Verse 3. "*My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?*" David's sin came in at the windows of his eyes, and came in, in fire, in lust, and must go out at those windows too; and go out in water, in the water of repentant tears: and then for the time; as the night defiled the prophet's soul, so the sin must be expiated, and the soul washed in the night too. This may be some emblem, some useful intimation, how hastily repentance follows sin.—David's sin is placed in the beginning of the night, in the evening: in the evening he rose and walked, and walked upon the terrace, and saw Bathsheba: and in the next part of time, in the night, he falls a weeping: no more between the sweetness of sin, and the bitterness of repentance, than between evening and night: no morning to either of them till the sun of grace arise, and shine out, and proceed to a meridional height; and make the repentance upon circumstance, to be a repentance upon the substance; and bring it to be a repentance
for

for the sin itself, which at first was but a repentance upon some calamity that that sin induced.

Verse 5. "*Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.*" That soul that is dissected and anatomised to God in a sincere confession, washed in the tears of true contrition, embalmed in the blood of reconciliation, the blood of Jesus Christ, can assign no reason, can give no just answer to that interrogatory, "*Why art thou cast down, O my soul?*"

Verse 10. "*As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me: while they say daily unto me, Where is thy God?*" The voice of oppressors is the voice of scorn, the voice of slander and reproach, and David shews us here from his own experience, how reproaches work: his oppressors sharpened their tongues as well as their swords against him: the tongue wounds deeper than the sword: the tongue wounds the spirit, but the sword cannot reach beyond the flesh; and God will take as deep, if not a deeper revenge upon the enemies of his church for their tongue-woundings, than for their sword-woundings: hard words as well as hard blows must be accounted for: for as these wound the children of God deepest, so will God most severely revenge them.

P S A L M XLIII.

Verse 1. "*Judge me, O God, and plead my cause*
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against

against an ungodly nation ; O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man. In this verse David shews, that deprecation is a branch of prayer, directed to God, either for the turning aside and prevention of an evil before it comes, or for the removing and taking of it away when it comes. And the evil which we deprecate may be either the evil of sin, or the evil of punishment. When we either fear or feel an evil, we must not with Jonah, sit down, and in a fullen humour, with ourselves out of the world; but we must pray as Christ did for his disciples, John xvii. not that he would take us out of the world, but that he would keep us from the evil. And so doing we have God's promise not to be tempted above our strength: For either he will abate the cross, or increase our strength to bear it; he will either remove the temptation, or give us his grace, which is sufficient for us.

Verse 5. "*Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God?*" In all dangers and afflictions we must wait upon God: for this is the use that we are to make of all our troubles and tribulations, thereby to be drawn nearer unto God and his word, and to stoop down under his mighty hand. This humiliation we see in Job: he did not seek to God's sworn enemies for help, he asked not counsel of conjurers, he knew he must apply to the Lord for a cure, and lift up his eyes to him that

that had made the wound, "*The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.*" We must not therefore renounce the Lord in the day of our calamities, but cleave unto him with full purpose of heart, considering that whatsoever our losses are, yet God is able to recompence them another way, and render them an hundred fold into our bosoms.

P S A L M XLIV.

Verse 4. "*Thou art my King, O God, command deliverances for Jacob.*" All deliverance is of God: whatever the instruments are by which deliverance is brought unto us, or in whose hands soever deliverance is put, let us know that the work and procurement of it is from above. It is the privilege of God, and of God alone to be a deliverer. And he hath deliverance at his command; command deliverance for Jacob, Man must humbly petition for, and beg deliverance; but God stands not intreating the creature, or debating the matter with kings and princes, with the strongest and most hard-hearted Pharaoh to deliver his people; but he sends forth a writ of deliverance, and authoritatively commands deliverance, when it is his pleasure a person or people shall be delivered.

Verse 5. "*Through thee will we push down our enemies; through thy name will we tread them under that rise up against us.*" Navies of ships, troops of horses, regiments of foot, garrisons, artillery, ammunition, and all military provisions,

visions, without God, prevails nothing. He it is who directs the arrow and the bullet to the mark, who gives wisdom to the commander and courage to the soldier, who strengtheneth his arm, and covereth his head in the day of battle: therefore Gideon, in Judges vii. prefers the Lord's sword before his own; the sword of the Lord and of Gideon: not the sword of Gideon without the sword of the Lord, nor the sword of Gideon in the first place: but first the sword of the Lord, and then the sword of Gideon; the sword of the Lord to direct, and the sword of Gideon to execute.

Verse 9. “ *But thou hast cast off, and put us to shame; and goest not forth with our armies.* God to sense casts off his own people when he casts them into dangers; but it is not so in reality, only in appearance; when they are thus situated, their faith takes hold of God, and God's love takes hold of them: for God hath tied himself to them in the bond of a covenant, they are fast to him in the everlasting bonds of his own love, therefore they cannot be cast off. So he promiseth his people, Levit. xxvi.—*Though they should provoke him to afflict them, yet he would not forget them utterly; he might put them into the hands of their enemies, but he would never cease to be their friend.* Many think when God's children are cast into trouble, that God hath cast them away: not so, for when they are in their enemies' hand, God holds them still in his own hand.

hand, yea, in his heart : the covenant holds God and his people so fast together, that they shall never part.

P S A L M XLV.

Verse 1. “ *My heart is enditing a good matter : I speak of the things which I have made touching the king: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer.*” The good that is in the heart will come out at the mouth, “ *My heart is enditing a good matter,*” and what follows, “ *My tongue is the pen of a ready writer.*” Heavenly thoughts in the heart shoot out at the tongue in heavenly words:—When the heart is devising a good matter, the tongue will be swift to speak, and set all to a good tune. Thus also while the heart is enditing an evil matter, the tongue runs to evil: such a man need not learn from others, he hath a root of bitterness in himself. Hence our Saviour concludes, “ *By thy words thou shalt be condemned; and by thy words thou shalt be justified.*” a man is justly condemned by evil words, because they testify he is evil.

P S A L M XLVI.

Verse 2. “ *Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.*” You see what thoughts faith proposeth to itself, and yet surmounts them. Faith is not only a purifying, but a prevailing and a conquering grace; faith is our victory over the world, and all worldly objections. As the grace of God towards man triumphs

triumphs over all the unworthiness of man, and will do man good, though many obstacles lie in the way. They understood not his works, they remembered not the multitude of his mercies, Psa. cvi. Every one of these were a stop in the way to do that people good, yet mercy got over them all : nevertheless he saved them.— Now I say as the grace of God triumphs over the unworthiness of man ; so faith triumphs over all the impossibilities, and improbabilities that seem to lie in the way of God, to hinder him from doing any thing for us, when once we have his word or promise. Thus David here, I will not fear though the earth be moved, though all the world should be reduced again into that first chaos of confusion, because God was with him, whose praise and promise is, to see to his servant's safety in the greatest dangers.

Verse 7. “ *The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge.*” Why therefore are we dismayed with the humours and fears of the strongest oppositions: Why are we appalled when we see spiritual wickedness in high places? if we look at their number, they are legions; if to their strength, they are principalities and powers; if to their nature, they are spirits that rule in the air : We are men, flesh and blood, single, weak, sinful. Whatever we are, our God is in heaven, and doth whatsoever he will; he is the Lord of hosts; though we are cowards in ourselves, yet in him we are more than conquerors; he that is more than all power, than
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all truth, hath said it ; the gates of hell shall not prevail against his church. Thanks be to God that hath given us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

P S A L M XLVII.

Verse 7. “ *For God is the King of all the earth, sing ye praises with understanding.*” It is good to be full of affection, but it is best to work in the full assurance of understanding. Affections without understanding are blind; and quickly run us upon an hundred inconveniences. And therefore that duty which summons all our affections here, at the same time calls for a work of understanding; sing praises with understanding: as if we ought not to perform any public duty in the church (those in particular of praying and singing) so as that others cannot set their understanding on work; then much less are we to perform any duty without the work of our own understanding. He is a barbarian to others, who either speaketh or prayeth what he understands not.

P S A L M XLVIII.

Verse 10. “ *According to thy name, O God, so is thy praise unto the ends of the earth : thy right hand is full of righteousness.*” God is exact both in judgment and justice: he is as curious in searching out the cause, as in sentencing the person; as ready to acquit the innocent, as to condemn the guilty; as careful to relieve the oppressed, as to chasten the oppressor; as zealous
in

rewarding those who deserve well, as in punishing those who do evil: not to reward, is as great injustice as not to punish. What God hath promised shall be performed; and what he threatens shall be inflicted: He will neither discourage goodness by neglecting it, nor encourage sin by winking at it. Thus we see, the right hand of the Lord is full of righteousness: his power and might are his right hand; and that right hand hath nothing but righteousness in it. God hath all power in his hand, but he wrongs no man: his hand is full of righteousness.

Verse 14. *“ For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even unto death.”*—The business of faith is to draw the soul purely to God. The saints here are invited to walk about Sion: we are to busy ourselves, to employ both sense and understanding upon Sion: upon the towers and bulwarks, upon her palaces and walls; not as if the saints should be taken up merely in the admiration of the beauty and glory of Sion’s ordinances, and privileges. For this verse informs us, we must not stay in Sion’s bulwarks and palaces; while it concludes thus, *“ for this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even unto death.”* He saith not it is this Sion, these strong walls and bulwarks, those goodly palaces, which I call you to look on, as your joy and happiness: no, this God, the God of Sion, you are chiefly to look on, and he is your chiefest happiness: unless you see God in Sion’s walls

walls, bulwarks, and palaces, it is not worth your sight. “ *This God is our God :*” he quite slips the mention of walls and bulwarks, and palaces, and rests in the mention of God only.

P S A L M XLIX.

Verse 10. “ *For he seeth that wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others.*” Even they which were so wise as to shun the corruptions of the world, yet they cannot shun the corruption of nature; though they have the wisdom from above, yet they have the frailty from beneath; though their parts may, yet their constitution is not more refined; they of the best house stand but upon a weak pinning: we read that the saints full of graces, full of virtues, departed: St Paul brings in a whole catalogue of saints, Heb. xi. but to me it is but as a burying bill: Which may teach us to endure the saints’ death with patience: for why should we be troubled at a common lot. If such a thing happened to them as never man endured, it were another matter; but when all virtuous men that ever lived before them draw this blank: when nature hath no other lottery, why should they be disquieted: it is well they have lived so long as to deserve well of the world, that they lent out their virtues beforehand, and have the age indebted to them; but that they should live ever, is beyond nature’s covenant, or any divine grant; though they have many privileges, yet they have not this in their charter.

Verse 20. “ *Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish.* ”—Man hath this privilege above beasts, that he hath an understanding; and not only so, but in this he is like to angels, yea to God himself; but unless he exerciseth his understanding, he acts as a beast. “ *Man that is in honour, and understandeth not,* ” i. e. doth not exercise his understanding, or act suitably to it, but is led merely by sense, or hurried by passion, this man is like the beasts that perish. Therefore let not passion have the upper-hand of your understanding; but the more we see others distempered and heated with passion, the more cool and composed we should be, and we should exercise the highest degree of patience when we see others impatient.

PSALM L.

Verse 8. “ *I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices, or thy burnt-offerings, to have been continually before me.* ” There cannot be a more fearful commination upon man, nor a more awful direliction from God, than when God says “ *I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices :* ” and when he saith, as he doth here, If I were hungry, I would not tell thee, I will not awaken thy charity, I will not excite nor provoke thee with any occasion of feeding me, in feeding the poor. When God shall say to thee I care not whether you attend my ordinances or not, whether you pray or let it alone, repent or not, this is a fearful direliction.

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Verse 12. "*If I were hungry, I would not tell thee; for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof.*" It is in this sense only that God can be said to hunger and thirst, namely, in the mystical members of his body.

Verse 23. "*Whofo offereth praise, glorifieth me : and to him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I shew the salvation of God.*" The best praising of God is not verbal but real, with the life rather than with the mouth. It is to be observed, the prophet elsewhere saith, I will talk of thy doing, it is one part of our gratitude to declare what God hath done, and is still doing for us: but that is not all; we must offer unto God the calves of our lips; but if nothing else, if nothing more is done, they will prove but the lips of calves. Whofo offereth praise, saith God here, glorifieth me, but then it must be by ordering his conversation aright. Many with Peter's fish, have money in their mouths, thanks in their lips ; but while they honour God with their lips, they blaspheme him in their lives. O remember, he praiseth God who ordereth his conversation aright: the life of thankfulness consists in the thankfulness of the life: a good conversation is the most effectual prayer and real praise.

P S A L M LI.

Verse 1. "*Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.*" This psalm was penned by David, upon his sin

in the matter of Uriah. It might have pleased God to have sent Nathan to check David in his first purpose of sinning; but the wisdom of the Almighty knew how to produce more glory by the permission of so foul an evil, than by the prevention, yea, he knew how by the permission of one sin to prevent millions.—How many had sinned in a vain presumption on their own strength, if David had not thus offended, how many thousands had despaired from a consciousness of their own wickedness, if these horrible sins had not received forgiveness: it is therefore happy for all times, that we have so holy a sinner, and so sinful a penitent.

Verse 3. *“ For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.”* Wash me and cleanse me from my sins, says David in the second verse: For saith he in this verse, I have acknowledged my sin; as if the confession of sins were the readiest way for the remission of those sins: and indeed there is nothing wherein our folly is more displayed than in those hurtful concealments; contrary to the proceedings of human justice: It is with God, confess and live: no sooner could David say, *“ I have sinned,”* than Nathan inferred, *“ The Lord also hath put away thy sin.”* He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but he that confesseth and forsaketh them shall find mercy. Who would not accuse himself to be acquitted of God? O God, who would not tell his wickedness to thee, that knoweth it better than his own heart;

heart; that his heart may be eased of that wickedness, which being not told killeth.

Verse 17. “ *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart O God thou wilt not despise.*” Those outward offerings were but the types of this inward: what cares God for the flesh and blood of bullocks, rams, or goats: the sacrifice of God is a contrite spirit, a broken heart. Our humiliation is sacrificium penitentiae, the sacrifice of penance; our new obedience is sacrificium justitiae, the sacrifice of justice, or that just and reasonable sacrifice the apostle speaks of; our thankful commemorations, are sacrificium laudis, the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. These are those sacrifices, which as they should be frequent under the gospel; so most fragrant unto God, and as perfumes in the nostrils of the Almighty. When Noah sacrificed to God after the deluge, it is said, God smelt a favour of rest, but now the sacrifices that we offer are a favour of sweetness. So that the same favour that Christ’s oblations had, Eph. v. 2. the same have our offerings. Phil. iv. 18.

P S A L M LII.

Verse 4. “ *Thou lovest all devouring words, O thou deceitful tongue.*” As there are devouring opinions, opinions which not only hurt the judgments of men, but devour their consciences, so there are devouring words, words that eat up a man’s reputation, and devour his good name as bread: slanderous mouths love

the finest wheat, the first of the wheat; a man's credit which hath not a bran in it, how sweet a morsel is it to such mouths: though in truth every name, by how much the more pure and spotless it is, by so much the more deadly will it be in the stomachs of these devourers. A good name swallowed by an ill man, will (as Jonah did the whale) make him stomach sick, if not conscience sick, and he shall be forced to vomit it out safe again.

Verse 5. "*God shall likewise destroy thee forever, he shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of thy dwelling-place, and root thee out of the land of the living.*" As the word is, they that smite with the sword, shall perish by the sword; so they that smite by the tongue, shall perish with the tongue. The tongues of the saints are in some sense sharper scourges than the tongues of wicked men: the word of God is in their mouths, and this is sharper than any two-edged sword; the truth of the gospel will set home, will wound deeper than any slander can: some indeed are sermon proof, and do laugh at present at all the spiritual artillery of God; let whole volleys of threats be discharged upon them; let them be hacked and hewed all day long with the sword of the word, they feel it not: but let these know, though now they are hardened against the spiritual scourge and sword, in the mouth of Christ's ministers, yet at the last Christ himself will smite them with the rod of his mouth, Isa. xi. And with that rod he shall whip all impenitent sinners

out of his presence into hell; where they shall gnaw their tongues which have scourged his faithful servants, only for doing or speaking their master's will.

P S A L M LIII.

Verse 3. “ *Every one of them is gone back, they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doth good, no not one.*” Seeing all men by nature are concluded under sin without exception, and there is none doeth good, no not one: it is no wonder that the image of God appearing in his children, be ill entertained by natural men; and that God's children expect no fruit from such trees: for this doctrine is delivered to quiet the hearts of the godly, when they are molested by the men of the world. And further, it should yield comfort to the godly, to behold the miserable condition wherein all men are by nature; and themselves called forth from this miserable state, and converted.

Verse 4. “ *Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people, as they eat bread; they have not called upon God.*” Nothing doth more evidence the blindness, and beastly besotting of the conscience of sinners, than the persecuting of the saints: it sufficeth not the ungodly to live a godless life themselves, except they malign, and most unreasonably oppose piety in others, “ *Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people as they eat bread.*” In all this we are taught, that to vex, bear down, and destroy the godly, is as great

great a pleasure to the wicked as to eat their meat; “ *They eat up my people, as they eat bread.*”

P S A L M LIV.

Verse 1. “ *Save me, O God, by thy name, and judge me by thy strength.*” Although David says here, save me, O Lord, for thy names sake; yet you are to know that yourselves have a part in those means which God useth to that purpose; yourselves are instruments, though not causes of your own salvation. Thy new creation, by which thou art a new creature, is wrought as the first creation was wrought.— God made heaven and earth of nothing; but he produced the other creatures out of that matter which he had made. Thou hadst nothing to do in the first work of thy regeneration; thou couldst not so much as wish it, but in all the rest thou art a fellow-worker with God: and therefore when thou comest to this petition, O Lord save me, remember that thou hast something to do, as well as to say, that thou mayest have a comfortable answer to thy soul in all thy prayers.

Verse 7. “ *For he hath delivered me out of all trouble: and mine eye hath seen his desire upon mine enemies.*” The same light of God’s word, made lively by God’s spirit, is able to shew a man both the destruction of his wicked enemies, and his own deliverance from them: and as a man may rejoice in God’s mercy towards himself, so also may he rejoice in God’s justice
against

against his enemies, provided he be free of private revenge.

PSALM LV.

Verse 2. “ *Attend unto me, and hear me : I mourn in my complaint, and make a noise.*” Great and painful sufferings put the best to complaints: for though in a child of God the inordinate courses of sinful flesh are stoped and mortified, yet sensitive flesh being pinched and pained will have its course. I mourn says David in my complaints and make a noise; such confession was upon his spirit, that he rather made a noise than spoke: to utter a voice is an act of reason; inanimate or irrational creatures make a sound, or a noise. David was so disturbed in his complaint, that he rather made a noise like the winds, or like a beast, than formed an articulate voice like a man.

Verse 12. “ *For it was not an enemy that reproached me, then I could have borne it ; neither was it he that hated me, that did magnify himself against me, then I would have hid myself from him.*” It is ill for any to deal deceitfully, but worst of all for brethren: For when a brother deceives, the sin of the deceit is doubled, whether he be a brother in the flesh, or a brother in friendship, or a brother in the profession of the faith: deceit in a brother is exceeding bad in all, but worst of all in the last. David complains here of the wrong he had received from such a brother, it was not an enemy, &c.—The reproach had not been half so heavy and
grievous

grievous unto me, if an enemy had reproached me: the wound had not been half so wounding, if an enemy had smitten me; but it was thou my friend, &c. to be reproached and wronged by thee, this is the thing that lies heavy upon my spirit: and indeed there is no wound worse than the treachery of a friend; he being such an enemy, whom we cannot easily prevent, therefore, pray to God to preserve you from your friends.

Verse 13. "*But it was thou, a man, mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance.*" Afflictions press us most when they are from our friends. "*What thou my son,*" said Cæsar, in the senate: What thou my wife, is thy hand upon me in my own house, might Job say. The height of enmity is thus exprest, *A man's enemies shall be the men of his own house,*" Micah. vii. This caused David to complain so bitterly in this psalm: the friend wound more than the sword. I grant that in one sense, the wounds of a friend are precious: precious are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful: precious are the wounds of a friend, when a friend doth wound with holy reproof; but when a friend wounds by sinful counsel, or solicitations unto sin, those are pernicious wounds. If that which is light in us be turned into darkness, how great is that darkness; so if that which should be our comfort, be turned into sorrow, how great is our sorrow.

Verse 22. "*Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he*

he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved." It is a very great ease to the soul in affliction, to commit our cause unto the Lord, and to put our affairs into his hand.—Man is not able to stand alone under the weight of his afflictions; both sin and sorrow are burthens too heavy for him to bear: if you would have ease, lay both upon Christ; it is no unbecoming boldness to do so: for he calls us to it, and bids us do it: Cast thy burthen upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: Christ is willing to bear a part, and put his shoulder under this burthen; yet it is his strength, and his strength only, that bears the whole: but here you must take this caution, be sure the cause you commit to God be a good cause. The committing of a sinful cause to God, is a dishonour to, and an high strain of presumption against God. A wicked man's prayer is always sinful; but how abominable is it when he prays to be prospered or directed in acting his sin: there is no gracious act, but a wicked man at one time or another will imitate it: he will pray, and repent, and forgive, and commit his cause unto God; and when he dies, commit his soul unto God.—It is good always to commit our cause and our soul unto God; but a cause or a soul are not therefore good, because committed unto God.

P S A L M LVI.

Verse 3. *"What time I am afraid, I will trust
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in thee." Hope and a right confidence is the daughter of faith, and such a daughter as is also a staff to her aged mother, when she is compassed about with dangers, and ready to sink through fears: this confidence will produce a wise and bold profession of the truth before men, as also earnest prayer to God. It is as the cork upon the net: though the lead on the one side sink it down, yet the cork on the other side keeps it up. Therefore though a child of God hath his offs and ons, though he hath passed through several frames of heart, and tempers of soul in his trials; though fear and his enemies are ready to swallow him up, yet he will believe and trust in God still, he will never let go his hold, his gripe of God, in any perturbation and distress.

Verse 8. "*Thou tellest my wanderings, put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in thy book?*" While we remain in this vale of misery, God keeps all our tears in a bottle: so precious is the water that is distilled from penitent eyes; and because he will be sure not to fail, he notes how many drops there be in his register. It was a precious ointment wherewith the woman in the Pharisees' house (it is thought Mary Magdalen) anointed the feet of Christ; but her tears, wherewith she washed them were more worth than her spikenerd.

P S A L M · LVII.

Verse 1. "*Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me, for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow*

shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast." The metaphor of wings signifies chiefly in this prophet, refreshment and consolation, yet not without a denotation of power too. For as no act of God, though it seems to imply spiritual comfort is without power (for it is the power of God that comforts me, to overcome that sadness of soul, and that dejection of spirit, which the adversary by temporal afflictions would induce upon me, is an act of his power,) so this metaphor, the shadow of his wings, (which in this place expresses no more than consolation and refreshing in misery) is so often in scripture made a denotation of power too, as that we can doubt of no act of power, if we have this shadow of his wings: so that, if I have the shadow of his wings, I have the earnest of the power of them too; if I have refreshing and respiration from them, I am able to say, my God is able to deliver me, with those children, Dan. iii. and with them also to say, if he do not, be it known unto thee, O King, we will not serve thy gods; be it known unto thee, O Satan, how long soever God defer my deliverance, I will not seek false comforts, the miserable comforts of this world: I will not, for I need not; for I can submit under the shadow of these wings, though I have no more.

Verse 10. "*For thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds.*" God's mercy reacheth unto the heavens, yea, and far above them too; and over all his own good,

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and men's bad works: otherwise God could never endure such provocation of sinners:— who yet live upon him, and share in his general mercy and goodness; but yet let the wicked have a care how they presume upon God's mercy and goodness: for they may learn here, that God's mercy goeth usually yoked with his truth, and bounded by it; God is faithful as well as merciful; faithful to fulfil both his promises and menaces; and as he hath mercy unmeasurable for his saints, so he hath righteousness and judgments for the wicked.

P S A L M LVIII.

Verse 10. “ *The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked.*” We may not think, that the joy and gladness here meant, was no more than that of prophane and carnal people, upon the receipt of some special mercy or signal deliverance. The wicked rejoice in the gift, but not in the giver; they nibble upon the shell, but taste not the kernel: the wicked revel, but the righteous only rejoice: for their joy is the fruit of fasting and prayer, according to that of our Saviour, ask, that your joy may be full, pray, that you may rejoice; and the end of it is a testification of their hearty thankfulness to God, and a breaking forth into these, or the like words of the psalmist, “ *Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits.*”

Verse 11. “ *So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that*

that judgeth in the earth." Our good deeds, as they are well accepted of God, so they shall not go unrewarded; and what God will give, why may not we crave: doubtless as we may offer up our honest obedience to God, so we may expect and beg his promised retributions; not out of a proud conceit of the worth of our earnings, who at the best are no other than unprofitable servants; but out of a faithful dependance on his promised bounty, who cannot be less than his word. O God, if we do ought that is good, it is thine act, and not ours:—crown thine own work in us, and take thou the glory of thine own mercies.

PSALM LIX.

Verse 4. "*They run and prepare themselves without my fault: awake to help me, and behold.*" David here prays to God, to behold and look upon his sad condition: for should not God see as well as hear, his children should want many things. We apprehend not all our wants, and so cannot pray for relief of all: God therefore is wont of his own accord to aid and assist his children: he seeth and weigheth the wrongs they sustain for peace sake; and they shall not lose thereby, provided that their pursuit of peace proceed from the filial fear of God. God's eyes are intent, his ears attend to the prayers of his servants: openly, secretly, he will right them and recompence them.

Verse 13. "*Consume them in wrath, consume them, that they may not be: and let them know that*

God ruleth in Jacob, unto the ends of the earth. Selah." This word *Selah*, is a word of uncertain sense and signification: for the Jews themselves do not know exactly and certainly what it signifies: but to speak upon the best grounds in the Hebrew grammar, and upon the best authority too, the word signifies a vehement, a pathetical, an hyperbolical asseveration, and attestation, and ratification of something said before: such in a proportion as our Saviour's amen; such as St Paul's *fidelis sermo*, with which he seals so many truths, this is a faithful saying, and similar to that of Moses, as I live faith the Lord; and as the Lord liveth:—Therefore, though God be in all his words, yea, and amen; yet in setting this seal of *Selah* to this doctrine, he hath testified his will, that he would have all these things the better understood, and more deeply imprinted: that if the wicked proceed in persecuting the godly: *Selah*; assuredly God will have them in derision: *Selah*; assuredly God shall shiver their bones, shake their best actions, and discover their impurity: *Selah*; assuredly God's hand shall be heavy upon them, and they shall not discern it to be his hand till they are consumed: *Selah*; assuredly, verily, amen, this is a faithful, an infallible truth, as the Lord liveth it shall be so.

PSALM LX.

Verse 1. "O God thou hast cast us off, thou hast scattered us, thou hast been displeased; O turn thyself

self to us again." Such a state, such a decision and scattering, doth the heart and soul of an habitual sinner undergo. The wanton and licentious man sighs out his soul, weeps out his soul, swears out his soul in every place where his lust, or his custom, or the glory of victory in overcoming and deluding puts him upon such solicitations. In the corrupt takers, his soul goes out, that it may leave him insensible of his sin, and not trouble him in his corrupt bargain; and in a corrupt giver, ambitious of preferment, his soul goes out with his money, which he loves well, but not so well as his preferment; this year his soul and his money go out upon one office, and next year more soul and more money upon another; he knows how his money will come in again, for they will bring it, that have need of his corruptness in offices; but where will this man find his soul thus scattered upon every woman corruptly won, upon every office corruptly usurped, upon every fee corruptly taken: therefore you see how necessary it is to pray with David, "*O Lord, thou hast cast us off, &c.*"

Verse 11. "*Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man.*" All creatures when in distress run to their refuge, and so do the saints of God, for the safety of their persons. As here David is an exigent, and therefore flieth to God for deliverance. Faith wadeth out of trouble as the moon doth out of a cloud by hearty and affectionate prayer. And David

gives his reason for applying himself to God, for, says he, "*vain is the help of man.*"

P S A L M LXI.

Verse 3. "*For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy.*" Lest any man in his dejection of spirit, should stray into a jealousy or suspicion of God's power to deliver him, as God hath spangled the firmament with stars, so hath he his scriptures with names and metaphors, and denotations of power.— Sometimes he shines out in the name of a sword, of a target, of a wall, of a rock, and of a hill, as here of a strong tower. It is true, God, as God, is never represented to us with defensive arms, he is invulnerable in himself, and therefore needs them not: but yet though God need no arms for himself, yet God is to us an helmet, a breastplate, a strong tower, a rock, every thing that may give us assistance and defence; and as often as he will, he can renew that proclamation, our enemies shall not touch us.

Verse 4. "*I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings. Selah.*"— Well might the prophet trust in the cover of God's wings, no man is so great that these wings cannot reach him: to what temporal, to what spiritual greatness soever we grow; still let us pray God to shadow us under his wings: for the poor need those wings against oppression, and the rich against envy. The Holy Ghost who is a dove, shadowed the whole world

world under his wings, incubabat aquis, he hovered over the waters, and he hatched all that was produced, because he sat upon the waters, and all that was produced so, was good. If thou wilt trust in these wings to overshadow thee, and to be a covert and a refuge to thee in all dangers, they shall hatch and produce joy in thy heart, in the midst of those dangers.

P S A L M LXII.

Verse 2. “ *He only is my rock and my salvation: he is my defence; I shall not be greatly moved.* ” — This doth not destroy, nor extinguish, nor annihilate that affection in men, of hope, and trust, and confidence in any thing: but it rectifies that hope, and trust, and confidence, and directs it upon the right object. Trust not in flesh, but in spiritual things, that neither bend our hopes downwards to infernal spirits, to seek help in witches; nor miscarry it upward, and fix it either in men or angels; but in him only that is nearer us than our own souls, our blessed, and gracious, and powerful God: who in this one psalm is presented unto us, by so many names of assurance and confidence, my expectation, my salvation, my rock, my defence, my glory, my strength, my refuge, and the rest.

Verse 7. “ *In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge is in God.* ” There are several names of God given in this verse, that so every soul may take with him
that

that name, which may minister most comfort to him. Let him that is pursued with any particular temptation, invest God, as God is a refuge, a sanctuary; let him that is buffeted with Satan, battered with his own concupiscence, receive God, as God is his defence and target; let him that is shaken with perplexities in his understanding, or scruples in his conscience, lay hold on God, as God is his rock and his anchor; let him that hath any dissident jealousy and suspicion of the free and full mercy of God, apprehend God, as God is his salvation; and let him that walks in the ingloriousness and contempt of the world, contemplate God, as God is his glory. Any of these notions is enough to any man; but God is all these, and all else, that all souls can think to any man.

Verse 9. *“Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie: to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity.”*—Vanity seems to be the lightest thing that the Holy Ghost could name, and when he had named that, he saith, and saith often, very often, *“All is vanity.”* But when he comes to weigh man with vanity itself, he finds man lighter than vanity: take says he, great men, and mean men altogether, they are lighter than vanity: so inconsiderable a rag, a bubble of this world, is man. *“Surely men of low degree are vanity,”* that is sure enough, there is little doubt of that; men of low degree can profit us nothing, they cannot pretend or promise to do

us good: but then says David here, “ *Men of high degree are a lie,*” they pretend a power and purpose to do us good, and then disappoint us: many times men cannot; many times men will not; neither can we find in any, but God himself, a constant power, and a constant will, upon which we may rely.

P S A L M LXIII.

Verse 1. “ *O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee : my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is.*” In all temporal calamities David is chiefly sensible of spiritual loss : it grieved him not that he was kept from Saul’s court, but that he was kept from God’s church ; that by being driven into the wilderness of Judah, he had not access to the sanctuary of the Lord to sacrifice his part in the praise, and to receive his part in the prayers of the congregation.—For when he says by way of lamentation here, that he was in a dry and thirsty land, where no water was: he expresses what penury, what barrenness, and what thirst he meant, in the next verse: to see thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary. From whence we may conclude, that spiritual losses are incomparably heavier than temporal: that the restitution to our spiritual happiness, or the continuance of it, is rather to be made the subject of our prayers to God, in all pressures and distresses, than temporal. For let me wither and wear out mine age in an uncomfortable prison,
and

and so pay my debts with my bones, and recompence the wastefulness of my youth, with the beggary of mine age: let me wither in a spittle under sharp, and foul, and infamous diseases, and so recompence the wantonness of my youth, with the loathsomeness of mine age; yet if God withdraw not his spiritual blessings, his grace, his patience; all that is temporal is but a caterpillar got into one corner of my garden; the body of all, the substance of all is safe, so long as the soul is safe.

Verse 7. "*Because thou hast been my help; therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.*"—the surest way, and the nearest way to lay hold upon God, is the consideration of that which he hath done already; which was David's way here: because faith he, this was God's way before, therefore will I look for God in this way still. That language in which God spake to man, the Hebrew, hath no present tense, they form not their verbs, as our western languages do, in the present tense; but they begin at that which is past: God carries us in his language, in his speaking, upon that which is past, upon that which he hath done already: I cannot have better security for present, nor future, than God's former mercies exhibited to me. Who doth not triumph with joy when he considers what God hath done; it is much that we have seen done, and it is but a little that God hath reserved to our faith, to believe that it shall be done. Every one of us can say to God, when we come to church, Lord, thou broughtest me

me hither, therefore enable me to hear: Lord, thou dost that, therefore make me understand; and that, therefore let me believe; and that too, therefore strengthen me to the practice; and all that, therefore continue me to a perseverance.

PSALM LXIV.

Verse 10. *“The righteous shall be glad in the Lord, and shall trust in him; and all the upright in heart shall glory.”* God in this text expresses what his delight is for the most part to do:—which is, rather to insist upon the rewards which the good shall receive, than upon the judgments and condemnation of the wicked: If he could choose, i. e. if his own glory, and the edification of his children would bear it, he would not speak at all of judgments, or of those persons that draw necessary judgments upon themselves; but he would exercise our contemplation wholly upon his mercy, and upon persons qualified and prepared for his gracious retributions: for so he does here, he speaks not at all of perverse, and obliged men, men incapable of his retributions; but only of persons prepared for them: and this retribution is fixed in the future, they shall glory; there arises this consolation, that though we have not this glory yet, yet we shall have it; though we be in dishonour and contempt, and under a cloud, of which we see no end of ourselves; yet there is a determined future in God, which shall be made present, we shall overcome this contempt, and we shall glory.

PSALM

P S A L M LXV.

Verse 5. "*By terrible things in righteousness, wilt thou answer us, O God of our salvation: who art the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off upon the sea.*" God's conversation with us in the church, is called an answering. Now if we look that God should answer us, we must say something to God:—and our way of speaking to God is by petition and prayer: if we present no petition, if we pray not, we can look for no answer, for we ask none. In a sermon, God speaks to the congregation, but he answers only that soul that prays to him: if they have joined in prayer with the congregation, they have their interest, and shall feel their consolation in all the promises of the gospel, shed upon the congregation in the sermon. Have you asked by prayer, is there no balm in gilead? God answers by his ministers, yes, there is balm, he was wounded for your transgressions, and with his stripes ye are healed; his blood is your balm, his sacrament is your gilead: have you asked by prayer, is there no smith in Israel? no means to discharge me of my fetters and chains, of my spiritual and temporal incumbrances? God answers thee, yes, there is: he bids you look above, and you shall find yourself in Peter's case: the angel of the Lord present, a light shining, and his chains falling off: all your manacles locked upon the hands, all your chains loaded upon the feet, all your stripes numbered upon the back of Christ Jesus.

Verse

Verse 7. “ *Which stilleth the noise of the seas. the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people.*” There are mystical waters which the Lord treadeth upon: people and nations are called waters, and many waters in the Revelation: the waves of the sea cannot be in a greater rage, than the nations of the earth sometimes are; and we may say never more so than at the present period. Now the power of Christ is as eminent in stilling the rage of the mystical as of the literal waters; and therefore they are here both joined together, he stilleth the noise of the seas, and the tumults of the people. There are also mystical waves, even waves within us, which will not be trodden upon by any foot but God’s. There is a sea of wickedness in every man’s heart by nature, Isaiah lvii. And the winds blow from all quarters of the heavens, and strive upon the seas; so there are divers lusts which strive upon the face of man’s heart; the lusts of pride, of covetousness, of ambition, of envy, these enrage and swell the waters: the Lord treads upon the high waves of this sea also; he restrains and keeps lust down by his power, else it would drown us.

PSALM LXVI.

Verse 5. “ *Come and see the works of God: he is terrible in his doing towards the children of men.*” Not only come, but go; go out, go forth, go abroad, to consider God in his works; go as far as you can, stop not in yourselves,
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nor stop not in any other, till you come to God himself. If you consider the scriptures to be his works, make not scriptures of your own, which you do, if you make them subject to your private interpretation. My soul speaks in my tongue, else I could make no sound : my tongue speaks in English, else I could not be understood by the congregation : so God speaks by his Son in the gospel; but then the gospel speaks in the church, that every man may hear: go forth, stay not in yourselves, if you will hear him: and so for matters of action, and protection; come not home to yourselves ; stay not in yourselves, not in a confidence of your own power and wisdom; but go forth, go forth into Egypt and Babylon, and look who delivered your predecessors (predecessors in affliction, predecessors in mercy) and that God who is yesterday, to-day, and the same for ever, shall do the same thing which he did yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

P S A L M LXVII.

Verse 2. *“ That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations.”* As light, so the participation of God’s light is communicative: We must not pray for ourselves alone, but for all others, that God’s way may be known upon earth, and his saving health among all nations; thy way, that is, thy will, thy word, thy works: God’s will may be known on earth; that it may be done on earth as it is in heaven: except we know our mas-
ter’s

ter's will, how shall we do it : therefore, first pray with David here, "*Let thy way be known upon earth,*" and then, "*Let all the people praise thee.*" God's will is revealed in his word, and his word is his way, wherein we must walk; turning neither to the right nor to the left.

Verse 6. "*Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God shall bless us.*" Whosoever would go to God with any comfort by prayer, must be sure that he hath some interest in God, that he is God's and God is his. No man praying, can hope for any happy success in his suit, if he cannot entitle God to himself, and himself to God, and say with David here, "*that God, even our own God shall bless us.*" Our royal prophet was a great man with God, few men had more suits in heaven than he, we can scarce find such another client in God's court of requests as he was, none more ordinary, none more earnest; his miseries were many and wonderful; and therefore he had need go the nearest and surest way he could for comfort when he prayed, and above all others he took this: Whenever he made any request, he made sure of his right, and pleaded that in all his petitions; and there was good reason for it; for the ground and evidence of our consolation in any thing, is our right we have in the same; wherewith may we be bold but with our own? what is any thing to us, if it be not ours: the dim light of nature in those perplexed Pagans, saw this, Jon. i. who prayed every one to his own god, and
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advised Jonah to pray to his God. A man can have no hope of success in his prayer, unless he hath an interest in that God to whom he prayeth.

P S A L M LXVIII.

Verse 1. *“ Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him, flee before him.”* The mercy of God is seen here, first, in his patience towards the wicked, implied in the word arise; for he seems as if he were asleep, and doth not mark what is done amiss. The Lord is patient and would have none to perish, but would that all men should come to repentance. He was longer in destroying one city, the city Jericho, than in building the whole world; slow to wrath, ready to forgive, and desireth not the death of a sinner: he doth not arise to particular punishments, much less to general judgments, but after long suffering and great goodness. Hear his precious words, *“ O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I, saith the Lord, Mat. xxiii. have gathered thee together, as an hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not.”* Secondly, as God’s mercies are manifested in his patience towards the wicked; so likewise in his actions towards the godly. We read in Matthew, that the ship of the church is tossed with the waves of affliction, and with the boisterous winds of contrary doctrines, in the troublesome sea of this world, and in the mean time, Christ our great master seems to sleep; yet when we call, and cry

cry, Master save us, else we perish, he doth arise and rebuke the winds and waves, and there followeth a great calm. He that keepeth Israel doth neither slumber nor sleep; our watchmen should wake in vain, if the Lord did sleep; but the truth is, he doth arise while we rest.—When thou art tempted by the Devil to private revenge, then say, let God arise, who says expressly, Vengeance is mine. If he tempt thee to the sin of incontinence, let God arise, who commands in his law, “*Thou shalt not commit adultery.*” Know you not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost; shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? No, no, let God arise, and so these raging lusts, and all our enemies shall be dispersed.

Verse 19. “*Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. Selah.*” In the midst of all our miseries and afflictions, seem they never so many, our interest in God will joy our souls: and upon this account God cheers up his people, Isaiah xli. Saying, fear not, be not dismayed; but upon what ground? Why even upon this, which will bear them up in all bitterness, for I am with thee, I am thy God. So here David comforteth himself and the church, because God was the God of their salvation: and in the following verse, this is our God, even the God that saveth us. When good King Aha came to God in great distress; observe how he fastens upon God with this interest, and a-

gain, and again; and Afa cried unto the Lord, his God, 2 Chron. xiv. And again, help us O Lord, our God: and the success did shew that such a prayer prevailed more than an army of men: the Lord being his God, was the God of his salvation.

P S A L M LXIX.

Verse 9. “ *For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee, are fallen upon me.*” Zeal is derived from a Greek word, which signifieth to burn as fire doth; and answerable to the three operations of fire, to heat, to burn, to consume. There are three sorts of zeal; the first heateth us, by kindling a desire of grace: the second burneth, by inflaming our hearts with the love of God: the third consumeth, by drying up the heart, absuming and wasting the spirits with grief, hazarding our persons and estates, by removing of scandals, reforming abuses and profanations of God’s name and worship. No sacrifice is acceptable to God, that is not salted with the fire of zeal: this was warm in David, Psalm xlv. burned in the disciples, Luke xxiv. consumed and dried up the very substance of Christ in this psalm.

Verse 26. “ *For they persecute him whom thou hast smitten, and they talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded.*” They who have least help in themselves, have usually least help from others. Hence we find Psalm x. the oppressed and the fatherless put together; as if the fatherless

less were to expect oppression for their portion, and they who needed most protection should be sure to find most vexation: When wicked men see a man afflicted by the hand of God, they afflict him more; when they see God hath wounded him, they would kill him: the trouble he is in makes their victory the more easy. As when the Philistines fell before Jonathan, 1 Sam. xiv. His armour-bearer slew after him; so do these, they slay those, who are fallen before the afflicting hand of God.

PSALM LXX.

Verse 5. “ *But I am poor and needy, make haste unto me, O God: thou art my help and my deliverance, O Lord make no tarrying.* ” I am poor and needy, saith David here, a stark beggar: neither will I hide from my Lord my extreme indigence, my necessitous condition; I am one that gets my living by begging; but yet here is my comfort, saith David, the Lord is my help and my deliverance, that is, the poor man’s king: he grieves with the father, and at the same time prays with the suitor, who must therefore be sure to succeed. Therefore Christ saith to the church, as in Revel. ii. 9. I know thy poverty, but that is nothing, thou art rich: thy poverty is not penal but medicinal. God’s dispensation is by poverty, to fit his church for better riches: as a wise physician purgeth a foul body almost to skin and bone, that so there may be a spring of better blood and spirits.

PSALM

P S A L M LXXI.

Verse 1. “ *In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust, let me never be put to confusion.*” This psalm is strangely mixt and made up of divers passions and petitions, according to the change of times and estate: in the time of affliction he prayeth, in the time of consolation he praiseth the Lord. Thus it was at this time with David, who had his interchanges of a worse and a better condition, as it was but needful; his prosperity like chequered work, was intermingled with adversity: see the circle God goes with his servant in this psalm, in this and the following verse David is afflicted, in the third verse he is delivered, and in the eighth verse he gives thanks: again in the ninth verse he is troubled, cries out in the twelfth verse, and in the fifteenth verse he is delivered, and praiseth God: thus God sets our troubles and our deliverances one against the other, as it were in even balance, for our greatest good. Sometime, he weighs us in the balance and finds us too light, then he thinks best to make us heavy through manifold temptations. Sometimes he finds our water somewhat too high, and then as a physician no less cunning than loving; he fits us with that which will reduce all to the healthful temper of a broken spirit. Prosperity sometimes makes the saints gather rust, therefore God sets his scullions to scour them and make them bright: and indeed, if we be prosperity proof, there is no such danger in adversity.

Verse

Verse 11. “ *Saying, God hath forsaken him :— persecute and take him, for there is none to deliver him.*” The only way to separate God and his people, is to make his people sin against him : this was Balaam’s diabolical policy to Balak, to separate Israel from God by sinning, for then he knew Balak might conquer them by fighting: the like thought no doubt possessed David’s enemies, when they said in this verse, “ *God hath forsaken him: persecute and take him,*” tacitly acknowledging, that while God is with his people, their enemies may pursue; but shall not overtake them.

Verse 21. “ *Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side.*” Consolation is the gift and proper work of God: he hath all comfort in his own power and disposal : there is no creature in the world can administer the least dram of comfort to us, without the commission or leave of God : it is possible for one man to give another man riches, but he cannot give him comfort: man may give honour to man, but he cannot give him comfort: a man may have a pleasant dwelling, a loving wife, sweet children, and yet none of these a comfort to him: the consolation of all our relations, and possessions, are from God : who-soever would have comfort, must trade to heaven for it : to comfort, is to speak to the heart : now God only can speak to this part of man ; man can speak to the ear, he can speak words, but he can go no farther: therefore the act and art of comforting, belongs properly to God.

P S A L M LXXII.

Verse 3. "*The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness.*"—A righteous habitation shall be a prosperous habitation. Whether we respect persons, families, or nations, thus it is in the ordinary dispensations of God: as in regard of our spiritual and eternal estate, the work of righteousness, is peace, so in regard of our temporal and outward, Christ who is the prince of righteousness, is also the prince of peace; he brought righteousness into the world, and peace followed: if thou art an habitation for righteousness, peace shall rest upon thee: and as the spiritual kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost: so the peace of worldly kingdoms is not meat and drink, but righteousness: righteousness is the pillar of a state, and the parent of peace: plant righteousness upon barren hills and mountains, and peace will spring up there: therefore, while we are filled with all unrighteousness, it is no wonder, if we are filled with all trouble.

Verse 6. *He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth.*"—The grace and favour of Christ, is as a cloud of the latter rain, that refresheth the ground after drought, and ripeneth the corn before harvest: one cast of his countenance was of more worth to David in another psalm, than all the world's wealth, Psalm xiv. 7. 8. of more worth than the corporal presence of Christ:—
therefore

therefore he tells his disciples, they shall be great gainers by losing of him: for I will send you the comforter, saith Christ, who shall seal up my love to you, and shed it abroad in your hearts. In the spiritual dew and refreshing of this comforter, doth our Saviour daily descend down upon the souls of his servants.

P S A L M LXXIII.

Verse 14. "*For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning.*" God's mercy reaches not so far, that thou shalt have no affliction, though thou trust in God. David had been an unfit person to have delivered such a doctrine, who saith of himself here, daily have I been punished, and chastened every morning: he had it every day, it was his daily bread; and it was the first thing that he had, he had it in the morning: here is mention of a morning, early sorrows, even to the godly; and mention of a day continuing sorrow, even to the godly; but he speaks of no night here; the Son of grace, the Son of God, doth not set in a cloud of anger upon him. Thus the primitive martyrs that abounded with zeal, and love, and righteousness, abounded with these afflictions too.

Verse 25. "*Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.*" If a saint were in heaven and saw not God's face there, he would say as Absalom said to Joab, 2 Sam. xiv. 32. "*Wherefore am I come from Geshur? it had been good for me, to be there*
still"

still, unless I may see the King's face." Though heaven be God's dwelling place, yea, his presence chamber, yet a saint could not be at rest, if he saw not God. It is not the jasper, nor the chrystal, it is not the pure gold wherewith the streets are paved, it is not the pearls, nor the precious stones that are precious in his sight, but the Lord Almighty and the Lamb, who are the light thereof. Whom have I in heaven but thee.

P S A L M LXXIV.

Verse 1. "*O God why hast thou cast us off for ever? why doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture.*" God seems to his people to neglect them when they are oppressed by ungodly men. This is the practical observation that may be gathered from this verse: and the reasons are, first, because their misery blinds them, and blind men when they are smitten, suspect every man that comes nigh them. Secondly, self love makes us suspect every man rather than ourselves: David and his people here should have reflected on themselves who were guilty; and yet in their affliction they reflected upon God, who was innocent. We are all Adam and Eve's children. When Eve did eat the forbidden fruit, she tacitly lays the fault on God, "*The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat,*" as if she had said, I had not infringed thy commandment, if thou hadst not made a subtle serpent. Adam lays it openly on God, hadst thou not given me such a companion to betray

betray me, I had been innocent. Thus we, their posterity, when trouble and misery is upon us, suspect God rather than ourselves: we may sometimes observe nurses to beat the stones, when children stumble through their own neglect.

Verse 19. "*O deliver not the soul of thy turtle-dove unto the multitude of the wicked, forget not the congregation of thy poor for ever.*" Wicked poor are no more under God's protecting thoughts, than wicked oppressors, or wicked rich men are. "*The poor man crieth, and the Lord hears,*" says the prophet, Psalm xxxiv. not every, not any poor man; some poor men may cry, and the Lord hear them no more than he did the cry of Dives in hell: therefore says David here, "*forget not the congregation of thy poor,*" thy poor by way of discrimination; there may be a greater distance between poor and poor, than there is between poor and rich. There are many ragged regiments, congregations of poor, whom the Lord will forget for ever, but his poor shall be remembered and saved: and these poor are of two sorts; either poor in regard of wealth and outward substance; or poor in regard of friends and outward assistance.—A rich man, especially a godly rich man, may be in a poor case, destitute and forsaken, wanting patronage and protection: God saveth his poor in both notions, both those that have no friends, and those that have no estates.

Verse 20. "*Have respect unto the covenant:—for the dark places of the earth are full of the ha-*
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bitations of cruelty." This teacheth us to plead God's covenant most earnestly in the time of our greatest necessity, in such troublesome times and days as these are wherein we now live: thus did Jeremiah in the time of the churches trouble, Jer. xiv. 21. God's covenant pleaded, was ever counted the saint's sanctuary to fly unto in times of danger: their greatest hope of deliverance was this, that God was theirs by covenant. Our prayers can have no other solid foundation: great need there is for godly men to lay claim to God's covenant, when all places are like dens of thieves and robbers; and oppression reigns every where:—Secondly, this calls on us to bless God for keeping his covenant with us, and so much the rather, because we have broke covenant with him, and given him just cause to fail us. We must therefore not only give him the glory of his truth, but of his mercy also: and when he at any time doth relieve us out of our distress, we must say, not unto us, O Lord, but to thy name give the praise.

P S A L M LXXV.

Verse 6. "*For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south.*" Men obtain not their greatness whether in wealth, or authority by their own power: for every good gift cometh from God above, even the things of the world (which are good gifts, though of a lower sort of good gifts) are sent by an higher hand. Earth is dropt down to
us

us out of heaven : outward comforts are not from the hand of man, either meritoriously or efficiently : and if the things of this world are not in our hand, then much less are the things of heaven : if not temporals, then surely not spirituals and eternals. It is an act of grace to say our promotion is of God. That principle of policy, every man is the contriver of his own condition, is false in divinity : man may be considered in a threefold capacity or state, and God the author of them all : in his natural, as a living man ; in his spiritual state, as an holy man ; in his civil state, as a rich or great man ; all that he is in any of, or all these, is all from God.

Verse 8. *“ For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red : it is full of mixture, and he poureth out of the same : but the dregs thereof all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them.”* The portion of the wicked man is decreed and appointed of God. In the hand of the Lord there is a cup : it is the Lord that gives it ; and the wine is red, (red with wrath, in the day of God’s wrath) it is full of mixture, (it hath no mixture of good, no sweetness at all in it, but all sorts of evil are mingled in that cup,) and he poureth out of the same, (upon many occasions he pours it upon the world) but the dregs thereof all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out and drink them : they have not only the cup, but the dregs of the cup, i. e. the worst of the cup : for as in a good cup, the deeper the sweeter, so in

an evil cup, the deeper the worse ; the dregs are the worst, the bottom is the bitterest of this bitter cup.

P S A L M LXXVI.

Verse 2. “ *In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling-place in Zion.*” As the city of Jerusalem was an ornament to the whole country, so was God to the city; as being a common refuge to both, and as having his holy temple there; not a professed sanctuary of impiety, as Florus spitefully stiled it, but far more deserving than Numa’s new temple in Rome was, of being called the sacrary of faith and peace. The church of which Sion was a type, is called Jehovah Shaumah, the Lord is there, Ezek. xlvi. There he hath set up a mercy-seat, a throne of grace, and paved for his people a new and living way by the blood of his Son; so that they may come boldly, obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. Heb. iv. 14. and because the Lord is in Salem, in his church, therefore in those great commotions abroad in the world, she shall not be moved: this bush may burn, but shall not be consumed; and that by the blessing of him that dwelt in the bush, Deut. xxxiii. Built she is upon a rock, and so invincible, that at any time she is in distress, God will help her, and in the nick of time when help shall be most seasonable, and most welcome.

Verse 10. “ *Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.*”

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We should consider this to help our faith in these times: God hath a negative voice upon those councils and conclusions, which are carried with one consent of man: the wrath of man shall either turn to his praise, or all that is beyond that, he will stop the remainder of wrath (that is so much as remains over and above what turns to the praise of God) shalt thou restrain. The sword is in motion amongst us, even as the sun, and the sword seems to have received a commission to pass from one land to another: yet a counter-command from God will stop the sword from proceeding: if he speak to the sword, the sword shall wound no more: a word from God draws, and a word from God sheaths the sword: he that commands the sun and it riseth not, can command the sword and it smiteth not.

P S A L M LXXVII.

Verse 4. "*Thou holdest mine eyes waking: I am so troubled that I cannot speak.*" Sorrow doth sometimes not only oppress the spirit, but stop the mouth, "*I am so troubled that I cannot speak,*" says David here: that he could not speak for trouble, speaks the greatness of his trouble.—Plenty of sorrow makes a scarcity of words: hence, sometimes God's children, in great affliction and trouble of mind, pray and cry much to God, when they speak little. Hannah continued praying before the Lord, her lips moved, but her voice was not heard. Would you know why in so much praying there was

no speaking? why her heart spoke and not her tongue? herself gives the reason at the fifteenth verse, "*I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit.*"

Verse 10. "*And I said, This is my infirmity: but I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High.*" The vulgar edition reads this place thus, nunc cæpi, now I have taken out my lesson the right way, now I have laid hold upon God by the right handle: what was that, plainly this, hæc mutatio dexteræ Dei, to acknowledge that this change which I see is an act of the right hand of God, and that it is a judgment and not an accident. Believers in Jesus, be not afraid of giving God too much glory, or of making God too imperious over us, by acknowledging that all our changes are acts of the right hand of God, but we do the contrary. An invincible navy hath been sent against us, and defeated; we sacrifice to the gallant admiral, his officers, and his heroic men: or to the casual storm, we say the winds delivered us: if treason hath been plotted and discovered, we sacrifice to a casual letter for that, we say the letter delivered us: we are oppressed by domestic incumbrances, personal infirmities, sadness of heart, dejection of spirit, all these wear out and pass over; we sacrifice to wine, strong drink, to music and good company, to all Job's miserable comforters; to any thing but to God.

Verse 18. "*The voice of thy thunder was in the heaven: the lightnings lighted the world, the earth trembled and shook.*" Let us consider if in this world good and evil are given us as it were in picture

picture, and since God useth such rough rods to chastise the vices of great men, what will that be in the other world: It is in the original of this text, the arrows of chastisement do presently pass away, but the voice of thunder, the sentence of judgment, shall go like a wheel, and the execution shall have no end. If there happen unto you loss of goods, it is an arrow that passeth; loss of children, an arrow that passeth; sickness, an arrow that passeth; disgrace, as an arrow that passeth away; temporal death, a feathered arrow that continually passeth away; but eternal death is the thunder in the wheel, which never passeth. To be drenched in a lake of sulphur, as a victim of vengeance, in a fire enkindled with the breath of God's anger, to see nothing but devils, to abide in nothing but torments, to suffer pains in every sense, to find a hell in the conscience, to have no other life than an eternity of torments, is a thing to be feared, above all things most dreadful.

Verse 19. "*Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy foot-steps are not known.*" Say to thyself, with David, O thou distressed saint, why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God, not only when the waters of affliction are low, but when they rise to the highest: for as the psalmist speaks here, thy way O God is in the sea, not only in the shallow rivers, but in the deep sea; not only in lesser troubles, but in the greatest exigencies: it is further observable, that God's usual course is to manifest himself, not in the shallow river

of a slight trouble, but in the deep sea of some desperate calamity. The disciples enter into a ship, but Christ comes not; the wind blows, the storm rageth, the wind riseth, and yet Christ appears not, but when they had rowed thirty furlongs, being far from land, and in the depth of danger, then they beheld Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh to the ship to succour them.

Verse 20. "*Thou leddest thy people like a flock, by the hand of Moses and Aaron.*" It is not to be wondered at, that the children of Israel were willing to follow Moses and Aaron, when God led them by the hand, that they durst follow him in the wilderness, whom they followed through the sea: it is a great confirmation to any people, when they have seen the hand of God with their guide. O Saviour, who hath undertaken to carry me from Egypt unto the land of promise; how faithful, how powerful have I found thee: how fearlessly should I trust thee; how chearfully should I follow thee, through contempt, poverty, death its self. Master, if it be thou, bid us come unto thee.

P S A L M LXXVIII.

Verse 4. "*We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come, the praises of the Lord; and his strength and his wonderful works that he hath done.*" Truth is a common good, no man hath the sole property of it: every man may challenge his part of this possession, and the more of it we impart to others

thers, the more she shall increase our own possession: truth multiplies in its degrees to us, while we make division of it to thousands. A candle gives not the less light to the owner, because many standers by see by the light of it. Our knowledge is perfected while communicated, this candle therefore is not to be put under a bushel, but must be set on a candlestick, that all may see by the light of it: The Israelites were charged to communicate the wonders which God wrought for them, and the ordinances which he had appointed them, when they were delivered out of Egypt, *Exod. xii.* and here you see it is our duty to preserve memorials of the works of God, and to declare his word to all about us.

Verse 15. “ *He clave the rocks in the wilderness, and gave them drink as out of the great depths.*” I wonder to see these Israelites fed with sacraments: their bread was sacramental whereof they communicated every day; and their drink was sacramental also. Twice had the rock yielded them waters, refreshing water, to signify, that the true spiritual rock yields it always: the rock that followed them was Christ: out of thy side, O Saviour, issued the bloody stream, whereby the thirst of all believers is comfortably refreshed. Let us but thirst, not with repining but with faith, and this rock of thine shall abundantly flow forth to our souls, and follow us till this water be changed into the new wine, which we shall drink with thee in thy Father’s kingdom.

Verse

Verse 16. "*He brought streams also out of the rock, and caused waters to run down like rivers.*" The power that turned the wings of the quails to the wilderness, turned the course of the water through the rock: he might if he had pleased, have caused a spring as well out of the plain earth; but he will now cause it to issue out of the stone, to convince and shame their infidelity. What is more hard and dry than a rock? what more moist than water? that they might be ashamed to think they distrusted God; and now unless their hearts had been more rocky than stone, they could not but have dissolved into tears for their diffidence.

Verse 19. "*Tea, they spake against God: they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?*" The thirst of Israel is well quenched, and now they complain as much of hunger. God hath much ado with us, either we want health, or children, or company, or meat, or drink. It is a wonder these men found not fault afterwards with the want of sauce to their quails. Nature is moderate in her desires, but conceit is insatiable: yet who can deny hunger to be a sore exercise; but were it never so grievous, it should have been no argument for them to distrust God's providence, and say, "*Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?*" Whereas they should have said, he that stopped the mouth of the sea, that it could not devour us, cannot he as easily stop the mouth of our stomachs: he that commanded the sea to stand still and guard us, can as easily command the earth to nourish
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us. Why do we not wait on him whom we found so powerful. Nature is jocund and cheerful while it hath enough, let God withdraw his hand, no sight no trust: Those can praise him with timbrels for a present favour, that cannot depend upon him in the want of means for a future. We are never weary of receiving, but soon weary of attending.

Verse 27. "*He rained flesh also upon them as dust, and feathered fowls like as the sand of the sea.*" It was not (you here see) of any natural instinct, but from the over-ruling power of their Creator, that these quails came to the desert: they must needs come whom God brings: his hand is in all the motions of the meanest creatures; not only we, but they move in him. As not many quails, so not one sparrow falls without him; how much more are the actions of his best creature man directed by his providence; how ashamed might the Israelites have been, to see these creatures so obedient to their Creator, as to come and offer themselves to their slaughter; while they went so repiningly to his service and their own preferment: I ask, who can distrust the provision of the great housekeeper of the world? when we see how he can furnish his table at his pleasure: is he grown careless, or we grown faithless rather? why do we not repose upon his mercy? rather than we shall want when we trust him, he will command quails from all the coasts of heaven to our board: O Lord, thy hand is not shortened to give, let not ours be short in receiving.

Verse

Verse 70. "*He chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheep-folds.*" When God sent Samuel to anoint a king out of the family of Jesse, all his sons were presented to the prophet, not one was omitted whom Jesse thought capable of any respect. Had it been left to the choice of Samuel or Jesse, David should never have been king: his father thought him only fit to keep sheep, but his brethren fit to rule men; yet even David the youngest son is fetched from the fold, and by the choice of God destined to the throne: nature, which is commonly partial to her own, could not suggest any thing to Jesse, to make him think David worthy to be remembered in any competition of honour; yet him did God single out to rule. God will have his wisdom magnified in the unlikelihood of election, and chooseth not by appearance, but by the heart.

P S A L M LXXIX.

Verse 4. "*We are become a reproach to our neighbours: a scorn and a derision to them that are round about us.*" It is the height of reproach a father casts upon his child, when he commands his slave to beat him. Of all outward judgments this is the worst, to have strangers rule over us, as being made up of shame and cruelty. If once the heathen come into God's inheritance, no wonder the church complain that she is become a reproach to her neighbours, a shame and derision to all round about her:—therefore it was not without a just cause, that
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David being put to his choice by God, resolved rather to fall into the hands of God than man. Strange invaders can never find in their hearts to say that to themselves, which God did to his destroying angel; it is enough, put up thy sword: yea, even their tender mercies are cruel, the greatest kindness they shew, is but an inferior kind of cruelty.

Verse 8. *“O remember not against us former iniquities; let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us: for we are brought very low.”* As it is our duty to remember the Lord, so it is our privilege that we may put him in remembrance: great princes have an officer called their remembrancer, and they stand in need of such; it is at once their honour, and their weakness to have them. Thus it is a kind of an honour to God, that he hath remembrancers, but it is his greatest honour that he hath no need of them: himself is the living record of all that hath been done, or is to be done. Knowledge is superior to memory; and he that knoweth all things is above remembrancers. God condescends to be spoken to by us after the manner of man, but we must not conceive of him after the manner of man. We must not think that he hath forgotten us, though we may beseech him to remember us.

PSALM - LXXX.

Verse 3. *“Turn us again, O God: and cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.”* There goes no more to salvation but such a turning;
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take notice, this turning of the Lord is an operative, an effectual turning, that turns our hearts, our eyes, our hands, our feet to the ways of God, and produces in us repentance and obedience: for these are the two legs which our conversion to God stands upon: for so Moses used the word, Deut. xxx. 1. 2. Return or turn unto the Lord and hear his voice: there is no turning without hearing, nor hearing without believing, nor believing without doing; turning is all these: therefore when Christ says, that if these works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented in sackcloth and ashes: in the Syriack translation of St Matthew, we have this very word *shubah*, they would have turned in sackcloth and ashes.

Verse 14. “ *Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts: look down from heaven, and behold and visit this vine.*” The church of God is oft set forth by the similitude of a vine: and God is here prayed unto, to look down from heaven and visit this vine, by digging, dressing, watering, and defending it from the wild boar that would root it up, and the foxes that would devour the fruit thereof: and without much care and looking, this vine, viz: the church of God, cannot be safe, much less thrive and flourish; as it is expressed in this psalm, that her boughs may reach unto the sea, and her branches unto the rivers. Of all possessions, none requireth so much pains to be taken with it as a vineyard: corn comes up and
grows

grows alone, ripeneth, and cometh to perfection, without the husbandmans looking after it, he knows not how, Mark iii. but vineyards must be visited, dressed, trimmed, pruned, pared, fenced, almost every day, or else it will be out of order. Christ therefore, as a careful gardiner, looks down from heaven and visits this vine, weeds it, lops it, prunes it. Let us therefore, that are the vines in the vineyard, be careful and zealous of good works; for Christ walks in his vineyard, beholds and visits how many raw, unripe, undigested prayers hang on such a branch. What gum of pride, what leaves and luxuriant sprigs, and rotten boughs there are; therefore with his pruning knife, he cuts and slashes where he sees things amiss, and this out of a singular love to our souls, which otherwise would soon be overgrown with the weeds of sin, as a neglected garden.

PSALM LXXXI.

Verse 10. *“ I am the Lord thy God which brought thee out of the land of Egypt : open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.”* If I would make God’s former working upon me; an argument of his future gracious purposes, by acknowledging, that God hath done much for me, I must find that I have done what I could (by the benefit of his grace) with him. For God never promised to man to be more than his helper: to this purpose saith God to David, open thy mouth (it is thy mouth, and there-

fore thou must open it) here David enters the work with God; and I will fill it; here God seconds the work with David. All beginnings and perfectings are of God; of God alone: but in the way there is a concurrence on our part, by a successive continuation of God's grace, in which God proceeds as a helper; and I put him to more than that, if I do nothing.

Verse 13. "*O that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways.*" God sometimes doth not mind his children when they cry, that they may hereby take occasion to remember how oft he hath cried and they have not minded him. Doth not the Lord cry out to his people of duty, and they do not hear him: doth he not complain here of this neglect, not only as a dishonour, but as a grief unto him? It is not to be wondered, if God let his people cry out of misery, and doth not hear them. The Lord shuts his ear, that we might consider how we have shut our ears; yea, he shuts his ears that he may open ours: if the Lord should always be swift to hear us, how slow should we be in hearing him, and while we have all our desires, forget most of our duties.

PSALM LXXXII.

Verse 1. "*God standeth in the congregation of the mighty: he judgeth among the gods.*" To keep the judges themselves in awe, God standeth over them, and telleth them of his presence in the very entrance of this psalm: he maketh one in
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courts, at all assizes, and sessions, and that which men wink at, he punisheth: the ignorance of the judge will not excuse him; for that God that is present with them if they do right, will be present against them, if they suffer wickedness to pass unpunished. Wherefore you see, how expedient it is for men in authority, to carry this presence of the Lord in their memory; that by it they may be comforted in their just proceedings; repressed from cruelty, and the exercise of private revenge in their public actions; and yet be stirred up to be diligent and careful, because the Lord himself is in the midst of them.

Verse 4. *“ Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked.”* God in judgment burthens them with oppression, who neglect the cry of the oppressed: the greatness and provocation of the sin may be read in the threats denounced against it, and in the judgments executed upon it. It is not enough (though it be more than many can say) for a magistrate to say by way of challenge, as old Samuel did, whom have I oppressed? unless he can also say, when did I not hear the cry of the oppressed. It is indeed very sinful to make the poor cry, but not to hear their cry is most sinful. To deliver the poor and needy; to rid him out of the hand of the wicked, is at once the duty and the honour of those that are in power. The poor and needy are God's clients, and to deliver such is God's counsel, L 3 , worthy

worthy to be written in letters of gold on the walls of all judicatories.

Verse 7. “ *But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.*” Nebuchadnezzar’s image had a head of gold, breast and arms of silver, belly and thighs of brass, but feet of clay; to signify, that whatsoever thy wealth, wisdom, birth, beauty, states, or strength be, thy foundation is in the dust. There is great difference betwixt a cedar and a shrub, a vine and a bramble; so long as both grow; but cut them down and burn them, and there will be no difference in their ashes. In this life some are set upon the throne, others are grinding at the mill; some are cloathed in purple and fare deliciously every day; others lie at the gates, and have not so much as the crumbs of their tables. But in the grave, rich and poor meet together: and the ulcers of Lazarus will make as good dust as the paint of Jezebel.

P S A L M LXXXIII.

Verse 18. “ *That men may know, that thou whose name alone is Jehovah, art the most high over all the earth.*” Wicked men will not know the evil of sin till they feel it. When the prophet, in the name of the Lord, threatned the Jews with a day of evil, it is usually added, they shall know that I am the Lord: as if the Lord had said, they have been told this often and often, they have had line upon line, and threat upon threat, yet they would not know it, but they shall know it; I will it be known unto them another way;

I will write their judgments upon their own backs, and with their own blood; and then they shall know, that I am the Lord. So here David calls down the wrath of God upon public enemies, let them be confounded and troubled forever: Why? that they may know that thou whose name is Jehovah art the most high over all the earth. Carnal men will not know the sovereignty of God, or they are ashamed to acknowledge it, till they see such as themselves utterly confounded and put to shame; they never exalt God till they see men cast down.

PSALM LXXXIV.

Verse 3. *“Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King, and my God.”* No affliction, no misery is so great, as to be deprived of the presence of God in his public worship and service: and this is that, which David laments here, that being banished and driven into the wilderness of Judah, he had not access to the sanctuary of the Lord, to sacrifice his part in the praise, and to receive his part in the prayers of the congregation. For angels pass not to ends but by ways and means, nor man to the glory of the triumphant church, but by participation of the communion of the militant; and without this communion David did not expect to enjoy the presence of God. And as though David felt some false ease, some whispering

pering that way, that God is in the wilderness of Judah, in every place, as well as in his sanctuary, it is true thou art here in the wilderness, and I may see thee here, but yet, O thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King, and my God.

Verse 6. “ *Who passing through the valley of Baca, make it a well: the rain also filleth the pools,*” As those grounds that lie low are commonly moorish; so this base part of the world wherein we live is a vale of tears, the true bochim, as the Israelites called their mourning place.— We begin our life with tears, therefore our lawyers define life by weeping; if a child is heard to cry, it is a lawful proof of his living; else if he be dead, we say, he is still born; and in our parting, God finds tears in our eyes, which he shall wipe off. Those men therefore are mistaken, that think to go to heaven with dry eyes, that hope to leap immediately out of the pleasures of earth, into the paradise of God: but let them know they must have a time of tears, and if they do not begin with tears they shall end with them. Woe be to them that laugh, for they shall weep; and if they will not weep and shake their heads here, they shall weep, and wail, and gnash their teeth hereafter.

Verse 7. “ *They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.*” — Grace is of an encreasing nature, it grows stronger and stronger: true grace lives, therefore it must needs grow: the grain of mustard-seed

feed proves a great tree: they go from strength to strength, or from company to company, that is from one good company to another, still gathering up goodness as they go: as the bee goes from flower to flower to gather honey; so believers go from duty to duty, from ordinance to ordinance, from praying to hearing, to gather grace and strength, every grace has strength; and the more grace the more strength, till we come to that which is strictly called strength of grace.

Verse 10. "*For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand: I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.*" Here the prophet shews, that the spending of one day in public meetings and assemblies of the godly, was more sweet than a thousand days elsewhere; he prefers the basest office, and meanest calling in the church, before the dwelling in the most glorious palaces. If the same mind be in us as was in the prophet, let it be our desire rather to be of the meanest account, and lowest reckoning in the church amongst the servants of God, than to be in the highest honour out of the church, where nothing reigns but prophaneness, and nothing is regarded but wickedness. This will be a witness to our own hearts, that we are truly religious, and are possessed with a love of godliness; when we prefer the love of God's house, before all earthly things and are careful to frequent the exercises therein.

P S A L M LXXXV.

Verse 1. “ *Lord, thou hast been favourable unto thy land: thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob.*” All true believers are the sons of Jacob, and the seed of Abraham; as well as the believing Gentiles, who are the sons of Jacob, according to the spirit, as the believing Jews the sons of Jacob, according to the flesh: and the church of these true Jacobines and Israelites are the land of the Lord, and the captivity here mentioned, is bondage under sin. In this captivity Satan is the goaler; the flesh is our prison; ungodly lusts are the manacles; a bad conscience the tormentor, all of them against us: only Christ is Emmanuel, God with us; he turneth away the captivity of Jacob, in forgiving all his offences, and in covering all his sins. For the blessed order of our redemption is briefly this: God out of mere mercy to the world, gave his Son; the Son by his death appeased the wrath of his father, and abundantly satisfied divine justice for the sins of the whole world: God pleased in his Son Jesus, forgiveth all our offences, and this remission of sin releaseth our captivity. Whosoever then is a true believer in Christ, is the Lord’s free man, in this life so set at liberty, that sin shall not reign in his mortal members, Rom. vi. but in the world to come fully freed from all corruption and concupiscence.

Verse 7. “ *Shew us thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation.*” This prayer is not only

a prayer of appropriation to ourselves, but a charitable extension unto others also. Shew us all thy church, charity begins in ourselves but it should not end there; it should dilate itself to others. True love and charity is to do the most we can for the good of others. We are full of the mercies of the gospel, present peace, and plenty in the preaching thereof:—We are full of mercy, and yet we pray for mercy; we pray that God would continue the mercies of the gospel where it is, restore them where they were, and transfer them where they have not yet been preached.

Verse 8. “*I will hear what God the Lord will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly.*”—A praying soul is an expecting soul. Job, in his sixth chapter had prayed, and prayed earnestly; and though it was but a prayer to die, yet he lived in expectation of an answer.—When prayer is sent up to God, then the soul looks for its return. Prayer is a seed sown, after this spiritual husbandry, the soul waits for the precious fruits of heaven, “*my soul waiteth upon God,*” says this prophet, Psalm lxii. and I will wait what the Lord will say, were his words in this psalm. Habakkuk, in the second of that prophecy, resolves thus, “*I will stand upon my watch, and will wait to see what he will say unto me.*”

Verse 10. “*Mercy and truth are met together: righteousness and peace have kissed each other.*”—Every worldly peace must not serve a christian’s turn:

turn: we must have peace and truth, peace and the purity of religion; righteousness and peace must kiss each other. That is a wicked peace where God is excluded the treaty, and he is the God of truth, as well as of peace.

P S A L M LXXXVI.

Verse 5. *“ For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive: and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.”* Those men are to blame as will so far abridge the great volumes of God’s mercies, so far contract his general propositions, as to restrain this salvation, not only in the effect, but in God’s own purpose, to a few, a very few souls. When any subjects complain of any prince, that he is too merciful, they do but think him too merciful to other men’s faults; for where they need his mercy for their own, they never think him too merciful. And which of us doth not need the mercy of God for all our sins? and supposing we did not in ourselves, yet it were a new sin in us, not to desire that God should be as merciful to every other sinner as to ourselves. As in heaven the joy of every soul shall be my joy, so the mercy of God to every soul here; is a mercy to my soul: by the extension of his mercy to others, I argue the application of his mercy to myself. This contracting and abridging of the mercy of God, will end in despair of ourselves, and that mercy reacheth not to us: or if we become confident, perchance presumptuous in ourselves, we shall despair in the behalf of other men,
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and think they can receive no mercy : and when men come to allow an impossibility of salvation in any, they will come to assign that impossibility, nay, to assign those men, and pronounce for this and this sin, this man cannot be saved: but this is not all, they do not hesitate to preach, that infants are in hell not a span long; from such an idea of a merciful God, good Lord, deliver us ; if infants go to hell, then the sacrifice of Christ did not satisfy offended Deity for the transgression of Adam.

Verse 11. “ *Teach me thy way, O Lord, I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name.*” Teach me thy ways, was David’s expression here, inure me to thy paths, as a little one is taught to find his feet. God’s way is both hard to hit, and dangerous to miss; we must therefore pray, “ *Teach me thy way, O Lord,*” which we shall soon forsake if God guide us not : for we can neither know nor do God’s will, without divine light and aid : so David in another place, Psalm cxix. I will run thy way, when thou shalt enlarge my heart : I shall do thy work with utmost diligence and delight, and come off roundly and readily therein; take long strides towards heaven, when thou shalt have oiled my joints and nimble my feet. Our promises of obedience must be conditional, since without Christ we can do nothing. Again, David was a great proficient in God’s school, and yet he would learn more, so sweet is divine knowledge, the more a man

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knows

knows of God, the more desirous he is to know him.

P S A L M LXXXVII.

Verse 1. “ *His foundation is in the holy mountains.*” The foundation of God’s church, and of every member of his church, is in his holy mountains, which cannot be removed, but abide for ever : great is the stability of every believer’s happiness: winds and storms move not a mountain; an earthquake may, but not easily remove it. That mystical mount Sion, the church, is immoveable; so is every part, every member thereof, for the main of his happiness. Jerusalem was surrounded with many high mountains, which were a great safeguard to it, yet did not always defend it, as the Lord doth his, by being a wall of fire round about them, Zach. ii. 5.

P S A L M LXXXVIII.

Verse 11. “ *Shall thy loving kindness be declared in the grave? or thy faithfulness in destruction.*” — When David says here in appearance, by way of expostulation, jealousy, and suspicion, will God shew wonders to the dead? shall the dead arise and praise him? shall his loving kindness be shewed in the grave? or his faithfulness in destruction? all these passionate interrogations, and vehement expostulations, may safely be resolved into these doctrinal propositions: yes, God will shew wonders to the dead, the dead shall arise and praise him, his loving kindness shall

shall be declared in the grave, and his faithfulness in destruction. For God will not forget the congregation of his poor for ever, the poor of this world is our poor: God's poor are they that lie in the dust, the dust of the grave, the dead; of whom God hath a greater congregation under ground, than of the living upon the face of the earth.

PSALM LXXXIX.

Verse 1. "*I will sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations.*" The point aimed at most, is undoubtedly, that in all our temptations, and tempests of conscience, we should fly to the sure mercies, and holy promises of God in Christ. If once we stay ourselves in this anchor-hold, we shall escape the shipwreck of faith. Ethan, who was either penner, or singer of this hymn, is by interpretation, robustus, one who is strong: now no man is strong in this world, but he who relieth on the sure promises of God. The consideration of our own merits is too uncertain and tottering, a foundation no ways able to bear the intolerable weight of our sins: but our trust is in the Lord's everlasting mercies, and this maketh us like mount Sion, which cannot be removed, but abideth fast and firm for evermore.

Verse 9. "*Thou rulest the raging of the sea:—when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them.*" The sea in its highest rage is at the beck and
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command of G d. As to walk on the sea is an argument of divine power, likewise to command the sea. When Christ rebuked the sea, and said, Mark, vi. Peace and be still, (as if one should hush a child) the men marvelled, what manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him? Winds and waves seem the most disobedient and stubborn, and unteachable of any thing in the world :— yet a word from God calms the one, and smooths the other : thus likewise, when the raging waves of lust swell too high in his people, it is the work of his spirit to tread these down; and when the winds of several temptations agitate these waves, he it is that commands them down. Who is there amongst us, that at one time or other finds not corruption raging as the high waves of the sea? how mighty and powerful is the Lord in that great work of his effectual grace, treading upon the waves of the sea, remaining corruptions in his servants and children.

Verse 35. “ *Once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David.*” God always swear-eth either by his essence, or by his attributes : whence we may take up this observation, that God’s attributes are his essence, and his essence himself. Now what is God’s oath? A solemn attestation to his promise, for our greater assurance, whereby he pawneth as it were his holiness, and the like. Not to believe God upon his word, which is all that heaven and earth have to shew for their continuance, were
incredulous

incredulous impiety, to expect or demand farther an oath of him, by whom we all swear, were presumptuous insolency : yet we see how the goodness of God overcomes the distrustfulness of man ; he gives us more security than we could have had the face to ask, or hope to obtain ; he vouchsafeth not only a bill of his hand, his written word, but also entereth into bonds for the performance of all covenants and grants made to us in Christ Jesus. As often as I endeavour to stay my thoughts upon this point, they break out into this exclamation, O thrice happy we, for whose sake God taketh an oath ; but most wretched we, if we believe not God, no not upon his oath.

P S A L M XC.

Verse 1. “ *Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.*” In the title of this psalm, the Holy Ghost calls this psalm a prayer, and yet enters the psalm in this first verse with praise and thanksgiving : in which if we compare these two incomparable duties, prayer and praise, it will stand thus, our prayers besiege God, especially our public prayers in the congregation, but our praises prescribe in God, we urge him and press him with his ancient mercies, his mercies of old : by prayer we incline him, we bend him, but by praise we bind him ; our thanks for former benefits, is a producing of a specialty, by which he hath contracted with us for more ; in prayer we sue to him, but in our praise we sue him himself :

prayer is our petition, but praise is our evidence, in that we beg, in this we plead ; God hath no law upon himself, but yet God himself proceeds by precedent: and whensoever we present to him by thanksgiving what he hath done, he does the same and exceeds it.

Verse 10. “ *The days of our years are threescore years and ten: and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow: for it is soon cut off, and we flee away.*”

When David says here, that our years are threescore and ten, if we deduct from that term, all the hours of our unnecessary sleep, of superfluous sittings at feast, of curiosity in dressing, of largeness in recreations, in plotting and compassing of vanities or sins, scarce any man of seventy, would be ten years old when he dies.

Verse 15. “ *Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil.*” It is an usual course in the dispensations of God’s providence, to let his blessings answer, and hold proportion with our crosses; that so his mercies may be according to the rate of our miseries: therefore we ought to bear up and comfort ourselves in the greatest afflictions and calamities that can befall us. Upon this account it was, that when God meant to give the Israelites Canaan, he first gave them enough of the wilderness, enough to carry some proportion with their future happiness: therefore it is said, Deut. ii. 3. “ *Ye have compassed this mountain long enough,*
turn

turn ye northward." They had been thirty years in compassing Mount Seer, which might have been done in so many weeks or days:—upon this ground it was, that here in this psalm, the people of God being in the wilderness, plead the equity of this rule and course of heaven: Make us glad according to those days wherein thou hast afflicted us: It was their prayer; let Canaan countervail the wilderness, and let the milk and honey of the one bear a proportion with the briars and thorns of the other.

PSALM XCI.

Verse 1 “*He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most high, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.*” God is so with his people, that they are said to be in him; therefore ye cannot injure the saints, unless ye strike through God, ye cannot wound them, but ye must wound him. To this end it is David’s character of a godly man in this verse, that he dwelleth in the secret place of the most high; you must destroy God ere you can destroy him. God is said to bear his people upon Eagles’ wings, Exod. xix. It is observed of the eagle, that she carries not her young ones in her claws as other birds do, but being laid upon her shoulders, she covers them with the spreading of her wings, so that the fowler who shoots at them must first wound her: just so, they that will injure the church must fight against God.

Verse

Verse 10. "*There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.*"—There is no sickness befalls any man, which may not befall the best man: there are some indeed that assert a saint to be plague-free, grounding it upon God's promise in this verse: but you must know this promise hath a double condition annexed to it. The one on the saints part, which is to make the Lord his habitation, verse 9. If then good men in pestilential times, through a distrustful fear, make the creature their refuge, no wonder if the plague infect them and their dwellings. The other in regard of the thing itself; which is only assured so far as it may make for God's glory, and the people's benefit, therefore it is said in the former part of this verse, there shall no evil come nigh him: whereby is intimated, that the plague shall not then come nigh too, when it is evil for a good man, but if at any time God see it good, either for the manifestation of his own glory, or for the spiritual advantage of his people, not the holiest person is in such cases exempted from the plague. For it may befall a saint to share in a calamity; as the good corn and weeds are cut down together, but for a different end and purpose.

Verse 14. "*Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name.*" The soul is not so much where it lives as where it loves, indeed love is a desire of union; and surely God's love to his church, infinitely surpassing
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the love of any creature, must needs unite him to, and make him one with her. To this end the psalmist speaking of a righteous man, renders this as the reason of God's being with him, because he hath set his love upon God; but doubtless the reason holds far stronger the other way, because God hath set his love upon his church, therefore he will be with her.—Such is God's tenderness towards his people, that were it not for his own honour, and their good, he would not suffer them to pass through the waters of affliction; yea, for this cause he is pleased to bring them into the depths of misery, that the glory, as of his power, so of his love, may be heightened in their delivery.

Verse 15. *“He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him, and honour him.”* God is with his servants in their afflictions not only to guide and comfort them while they are under these afflictions; but to deliver them also out of them. This is the promise which the Lord makes to the believing Soul, *“I will be with him in trouble,”* and what follows, as the blessed effect of his presence, but liberation and exaltation, *“I will deliver him and honour him.”* God is with his people, not only to comfort them in, and support them under, but to rescue them out and reward them after all their troubles.

Verse 16. *“With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.”* In this verse is a fulness and a satisfaction likewise, a quitness, a contentedness

contentedness, an acquiescence in that fullness. Satisfy is, let us be full, and let us feel it, and rest in that fullness: these two make up all heaven, all the joy, and all the glory of heaven, fullness, and satisfaction in it: this text might be referred to the resurrection, and to that fullness and that satisfaction which we shall have then, and not till then. For though we shall have a fullness in heaven as soon as we come thither, yet that is not fully a satisfaction, because we shall desire and expect a fuller satisfaction in the re-union of body and soul. And when heaven itself cannot give us this full satisfaction till then, in what can we look for it in this world? where there is no true fullness, nor any satisfaction in that kind of fullness which we seem to have.

P S A L M XCII.

Verse 13. *“Those that be planted in the house of the Lord, shall flourish in the courts of our God.”* Saints are planted in the house of God; they have a kind of rooting there, but though the tabernacle be a good rooting place, yet we cannot root firmly there, unless we are rooted in Jesus Christ: to root in tabernacle work, or in the bare use of ordinances, as if that would carry it, and commend us to God, when there is no heart work, when there is no looking to the power of godliness, and to communion with Christ, what is this but building upon the sand: many come often to the tabernacle, who are mere strangers to Christ, they use
pure

pure ordinances, but are themselves impure: these may have a great name in the tabernacle for a while, but God blots their names, and roots their hopes out of the tabernacle.

Verse 14. “ *They shall still bring forth fruit in old age: they shall be fat and flourishing.*” A true disciple must not be like the barren fig-tree in the gospel that Christ cursed, that had leaves but no fruit; but he must be like this tree that flourished and brought forth fruit in the court of the Lord: the Scripture abounds in proofs of this; it was the common charge given by the Baptist to his hearers, when they began to make a good profession, that they should bring forth fruits meet for repentance. Your converts and professors of the New Testament of special note, their good works are mentioned. As St Matthew, his general good work is specified, he followed Christ; and his particulars of bounty, he made Jesus a feast; and of charity, he invited his fellow publicans to be guests, Math. ix. Zacheus, “ *Behold, O Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor,*” there were his works: the believers of Ephesus came, and confessed, and shewed their works, Acts xix. And thus it was generally with all true professors of religion, they still accompanied their holy profession with good works.

P S A L M XCIII.

Verse 4. “ *The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea.*” Chear up then thou disconsolate

solate soul; doubt not in the church's safety in general, the Lord in the midst of her is mighty; despair not of thine own preservation in particular; God is more powerful to protect, than Satan and his instruments can be malicious to destroy. So true is this of the psalmist, "*the Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters.*" Therefore consider not so much thy distress, as thy deliverer; and when men's malicious combination may affright thee, let Divine association support thee. The danger may exceed thy resistance, but not God's assistance; the enemies power may surpass thy strength, their subtilty outwit thy prudence, but neither can excel the wisdom and might of God that is with thee. O learn therefore to try God in his strength, to trust him in difficulties, and when the merciless waves are ready to swallow thee up, commit thyself to his custody. The mariner in straits looks up to heaven, do thou so; and remember that when the waters of affliction are never so high, yet the Lord on high is mightier than they.

Verse 5. "*Thy testimonies are very sure: holiness becometh thine house, O Lord for ever.*" Singular things are expected of all that draw nigh to God in any duty, but especially in the office of the ministry: they must sanctify themselves with a singular care above that of the rest of the people: those that stand in the presence of princes, must be exact in their carriage. God appointed both the weights and measures of the sanctuary to be twice as large as those of
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the commonwealth, to shew, that he expects much more of those that serve him there, than he doth of others. Holiness becomes every house well, but best God's; and every man, but most of all the ministers; who is the mirror in which the people behold heaven, and the convoy to direct them thither. Now if the glass be spotted, instead of an angel they look upon a fury; and if the conduct be false, there is more danger in the guide than the way: none therefore are to walk so strictly as the minister.

P S A L M XCIV.

Verse 19. “*In the multitude of my thoughts, within me, thy comforts delight my soul.*” How fair a beam of the joys of heaven is true comfort in this life. If I know the mercies of God exhibited to others, and feel them not in myself, I am not of David's church, of David's choir: I cannot sing of the mercies of God: I may see them, and I may sigh to see the mercies of God determined in others, and not extended to me; but I cannot sing of the mercies of God, if I find no mercy in myself: but when I come to this here, “*in the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul,*” then the true comforters is descended upon me, and the Holy Ghost hath overshadowed me; and all that shall be born of me, and proceed from me, shall be holy and joyful.

Verse 23. “*And he shall bring upon them their own iniquity, and shall cut them off in their own*
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wickedness;

wickedness ; yea, the Lord our God shall cut them off.” As God threatens death to deter men from sin, so sometimes he is as it were constrained to send death to keep or take men off from sinning. A godly man saith, if God kill me, yet will I trust in him ; and some wicked men say in effect, though not in the letter, till God kill us, we will sin against him. Upon this account the psalmist asks the question here “ *how long shall the wicked?*” and the answer is given in this verse, “ *the Lord shall bring upon them,*” &c. as if he had said, except the Lord cut them off in their wickedness, they will never leave off doing wickedly : upon this account, the punishment of the wicked is eternal, because if they should live always, they would sin always ; and therefore most justly are they punished always.

PSALM XCV.

Verse 7. “ *For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand : to day if ye will hear his voice.*” A sheep saith Aristotle, is a foolish and sluggish creature, aptest of any thing to wander, though it feel no want, and most unable to return : the ox knoweth his owners, and the ass his master’s crib, saith the prophet Isaiah : swine in a storm run home and at night will make to the trough ; but a sheep can make no shift to save its self from tempests and inundation, there it stands and will perish, if not driven away by the shepherd ; such a silly shiftless thing is man left
to

to himself; but blessed be God for Jesus Christ that best of shepherds, who restoreth the lost soul, and reduceth it, when like a lost sheep it is gone astray, giving it rest, and causing it to serve him in holiness and righteousness: therefore though I walk through the dark valley of the shadow of death, I shall want nothing, was our royal prophet's expression in another psalm.

Verse 8. *“Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness.”* One reason wherefore we should praise God, is here taken from his judgments, for God useth all means to win men unto him, the sum of which is, that we must not harden our hearts, and obstinately settle ourselves in sin, as our forefathers in the wilderness, but rather hear the voice of the Lord speaking unto us out of his word all the day long, the whole time of our life generally, but on the Sabbath day more especially, lest in his anger he swear we shall not enter into his rest; these things are written for our example, upon whom the ends of the world are come. The judgments of God are like thunder-claps, the punishment lights but on one, the fright upon all: and therefore as in commonwealths, places of execution are public for the terror of all; so God in this huge theatre of the world doth make some spectacles unto others, that those others might take example by them, or else be made examples to the rest.

P S A L M XCVI.

Verſe 10. “ *Say among the heathen, that the Lord reigneth: the world alſo ſhall be eſtabliſhed that it ſhall not be moved; he ſhall judge the people righteouſly.*” The Lord reigns, that is in the Hebrew Adonai, the ſuſtainer and upholder of all. Chriſt is King of kings, and Lord of lords, this name Chriſt hath, been written upon his veſture, that they may ſee it; and on his thigh, where hangs his ſword, to ſhew his abſolute dominion: and it is in the preſent tenſe, the Lord doth reign, he is upon his throne, there is now no king but he: all the power of men is broken, all the thrones of men are ſhattered into duſt, and this is matter of greateſt joy to the righteous. I am glad; ſaid a confeſſor, that Chriſt is Lord of all; for otherwiſe I ſhould have been out of hope, when I behold the church’s enemies.

P S A L M XCVII.

Verſe 11. “ *Light is ſown for the righteous, and gladneſs for the upright in heart.*” The perſons to whom God propoſes here this retribution of joy and gladneſs, are direct men, and plain men; and then this ſtraightneſs and ſmoothneſs muſt be in the heart: all the upright in heart ſhall have it, and none but they; for it is the heart that God looks after: and therefore ſays the Holy Ghoſt, Prov. xxiii. “ *My ſon give me thine heart.*” Was he his ſon, and had he not his heart? that may very well be, there is a filiation without

without the heart; not such a filiation as shall ever make him partaker of the inheritance, but yet a filiation. The associating ourselves to the sons of God in an outward profession of religion, makes us so far the sons of God, as that the judgment of man cannot, and the judgment of God doth not distinguish them; as when Satan stood among the sons of God, God did not disavow him, God did not excommunicate him; God makes his use of him, and yet God knew his heart was far from him.

P S A L M XCVIII.

Verse 2. “ *The Lord hath made known his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen.*” David for our example, considers here, and refers all salvation to salvation in Christ, for what is the Lord’s salvation? Simeon makes a safe answer, mine eyes have seen thy salvation, when he had seen Christ Jesus: this then is he, who is not only salvator populi sui, the saviour of his people; but salutificator, so the author of this salvation: as that from all eternity he was at the making of the decree, as well as in the fulness of time he was at the executing of it. In the work of our salvation, if we consider the merit, Christ was sole and alone, no Father, no Holy Ghost trode the wine-press with him; and if in the work of our salvation, we consider the mercy there, though Christ was not sole and alone, yet even in that Christ was equal to the Father

Holy Ghost, so he is the very author of this salvation: as that when it came to the act, he, and not they, died for us; and when it was in the counsel, he, as well as they, and as soon as they, decreed it for us.

Verse 4. *“ Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice and sing praise.”* Poor Adam, that is his name, earth, poor man, poor earthly man, low earth; the lowest of the creation, the basest and meanest of the whole world, poor dark earth: let this creation which is earth, let it rejoice, make a loud noise, and sing praise, as it is in this verse; all men, women, and children, relations and comforts; all the things of the world, religion, worship, gifts, trading, let all these things rejoice: but what, must not all these things be done away, that Christ may reign? the evil of them, the sinfulness, the baseness, the corruption, the infirmity shall be done away, but this earth must not be lost, the kingdom of God must be established in this earth, in the sons of men; and they shall be taken up into the fellowship of God, purified, and sanctified, and restored: every thing shall be brought up into the holiness of God, the being of God, the spirit of God; therefore let the earth make a joyful noise, rejoice, and sing praise: this is good for the poorest creatures that live below, that are strangers to heaven, that dwell at a great distance from God, let them rejoice; for God is come to restore them, to make them all new, a new heaven and a new earth, therefore let them rejoice.

P S A L M XCIX.

Verse 1. “ *The Lord reigneth, let the people tremble: he sitteth between the cherubims, let the earth be moved.*” This is matter of greatest joy to the righteous: I am glad that Christ is Lord of all, for otherwise I should utterly have been out of hope, says one upon the view of the church’s enemies: and yet, though the Lord reigneth, God’s people must not presume so much upon it, as to cast off all care and fear: let the people tremble, are the next words, even God’s own people the Jews; for so commentators understand the words: therefore saith the psalmist in another place, “ *serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice before him with trembling:*” a strange mixture of contrary passions (for base fear hath torment, 1. John, iv. 18.) but such as is usual with God’s servants, whose task it is to work out their salvation with fear and trembling, Phil. ii. 12. The reason that men still tremble, and are still troubled with this doubt, and that fear, is, because their salvation is not wrought out, something is left undone; and their conscience tells them so; therefore those venturous bold spirits that dare live in any evil, so it stare not in their faces, and have not an heart fearful of the least evil, never care to work out their salvation, to aspire to immortality.

P S A L M C.

Verse 2. “ *Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing.*” God did insinuate

sinuate himself to his people the Jews as a Lord, *Exod. xx. "I am the Lord thy God,"* but to the Christians as a father, *Math. vi. 9. "Our Father which art in heaven:"* therefore seeing we are translated from the bondage of servants into the liberty of sons, having instead of the law, which was exceeding grievous, a burthen that is light, and a yoke that is easy, let us serve the Lord with gladness, and come before his presence with a song; not in the bitterness of murmuring, but with the joyful noise of love: the reason, or rather motive of this is, because his truth endureth from generation to generation; that is, he did in due time perform the mercy promised to our forefathers, he remembered his holy covenant, and kept that oath which he swore to our fathers Abraham and his seed for ever: to what end? that we might serve God with gladness, as David here, that is, serve him all the days of our life without fear, as Zacharias sung, *Luke, i.*

P S A L M C I.

Verse 1. "*I will sing of mercy and judgment : unto thee, O Lord, will I sing.*" David proposeth to himself, that he would sing of mercy and judgment; but it is of mercy first, and not of judgment at all: the work then of ministers is to sing of mercy and consolation; a work than which none is more divine, nor more proper to God than those instruments, whom he sends to work upon the souls and consciences of others. Who can conceive the sweetness of
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that salvation, when the spirit of God says to a minister on the Lord's day, go forth to-day and preach; and preach consolation, preach peace, preach mercy; and spare my people, spare that people whom I have redeemed with my precious blood, and be not angry with them for ever; do not grind them, do not wound them, do not astonish them with the bitterness, with the heaviness, with the sharpness, with the consternation of my judgments.

Verse 5. "*Who so privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off: him that hath an high look, and a proud heart, will not I suffer.*" The Holy Ghost seems to be straitned, when he comes to express here God's proceedings with a proud man, his detestation of him, and aversion from him. God does not say of the proud man, I cannot work upon him, I cannot mend him, I cannot pardon him, I cannot suffer him, I cannot stay with him; but merely, I cannot, and no more; the original translation is, I cannot, that word of suffering is but a voluntary word supplied by the translators; in the original it is, as it were an abrupt breaking off on God's part from the proud man: pride is so contrary to God, that the proud man and he can meet in nothing.

P S A L M CII.

Verse 9. "*For I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping.*" Here is shewed the state and condition of many of God's children in their afflictions; the phrase imports his

his sorrows to have been without intermission; that he had no stops, no breathing time which was not a sighing time, no, not for a meal-time: while he was eating, with every bit of meat he had a morsel of sorrow. I mingled my drink with weeping, says the prophet; when I drink my tears flow into my cup; when I take in a few drops of comfort, I weep out streams of sorrow; or my sighings come and return so fast upon me, that I have no time to eat my bread; I am so plied and followed with these afflictions, that I have no leisure to be comforted.

Verse 24. *“ I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days: thy years are throughout all generations.”* Two of God’s saints, Job, and Jonah, desired to die out of discontent; two others, Simeon and St Paul, content to desire death; and two more, David and Hezekiah, not discontented, yet not content to die, as this text clears the case in respect of David, let this be the case of my soul, that while I live, I may live to thee, and then when I die, I shall live with thee. We may further learn from hence, that as no man can die before God’s time, so many a man may die before his own time, that is, before he is prepared by grace, or before he be ripened in the course of nature: those two ways a man dies before his time; first, when he dies without any strength of grace; secondly, when he dies in the strength of nature; a godly man prays that he may not die out of season; but a wicked man never dies
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in season: for a 'wicked man never lives out half his days; either he is cut off before he hath lived half the course of nature; or he is cut off before he hath lived a quarter of the course of his desires; either he lives not half so long as he might; or not a tenth part so long as he would.

Verse 27. "*But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.*" We may learn from hence, that God is to be preferred before all creatures; they are changeable and subject to alteration, which is contrary to the nature of God, with God is no change, neither shadow of change, the Almighty remaineth one and the same for ever; herein is great comfort offered to the servants of God; as on the other hand, horror to the wicked and disobedient: for seeing God is immutable, we may take strong consolation from former examples of God's dealings towards his dearest children; in all our temptations and trials we should build ourselves upon that blessed experience, as upon a sure foundation that can never fail us.

P S A L M CIII.

Verse 3. "*Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.*" Man blesteth God, when he praiseth God; when he takes notice of, and returns thanks for the blessings received of God, therefore David says here, "*bless the Lord, O my soul,*" thankfully to remember benefits, is to bless the Lord."

Verse 3. "*Who forgiveth all thine iniquities who*
healeth

healeth all thy diseases." How often doth God admit into his own name, this addition of universality all, although he would be known by that especially, he is omnipotent, there he can do all; he is omniscient, there he can know all; he is omnipresent, there he can direct all. Neither doth God extend himself to all, that he may gather from all; but that he might gather all, that all might meet in him, and enjoy him: so God is all center, as that he looks to all; and so all circumference, as that he embraces all. There is no one word so often in the bible as this word all; neither hath God spread the word more liberally upon all the lines of this book, than he hath his glorious purposes upon all the sons of men; therefore to withdraw God's general goodness out of his general propositions, (that he would have all repent, that he came to save all) is to contract and abridge God himself in his most extensive attribute or denotation, that is, his mercy: and as there is a curse laid upon them, that taketh away any part, any proportion out of this book; so there is a curse, or an ill affection and countenance from God on him, that presses any of his general propositions to a narrower or less gracious sense than God meant in it: It were as easily believed, that God looks towards no man, as that there should be any man that he looks not towards: I could as easily doubt of the universal providence of God, as of the universal mercy of God, if men continued not in rebellion and opposition.

Verse

Verse 15. “ *As for man, his days are as grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.*” It is an argument moving the Lord to compassion, to plead the frailty of our condition: there is no argument from ourselves so effectual to draw out the bowels of God’s compassion toward us, either in regard of our spiritual or temporal estate, as this, to tell him how frail we are: like as a father pitieth his children, so doth the Lord, &c. verse 13. Why, what stirs up this pity? he remembereth that we are but dust in the former verse, and in this, that our days are as grass. That which God makes the argument of his turning to us in mercy; that we should make our argument when we turn to him in prayer: should we plead before God our perfections, and say, Lord, remember our holiness, our zeal, our prayers, our tears, our fasting, our humiliations; could any of these move God, or be any way attractive of his compassion towards us; if we will plead our perfections, God will despise our prayer: our strongest argument is, to say we are weak, we are as grass, and to tell God we are sinful, prevails more than to tell him we are righteous; we shall gain most by saying, we are unprofitable servants; and be received soonest by crying with St Luke’s prodigal, “ *I am no more worthy to be called thy son, make me as one of thy hired servants.*”

P S A L M CIV.

Verse 1. “ *Bless the Lord, O my soul: O Lord*
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my God, thou art very great, thou art clothed with honour and majesty." Bless the Lord, O my soul, i. e. all my faculties and senses: the whole soul and body must be engaged in this service of blessing God: the judgment to set a right estimate upon mercies, the memory to recognize and retain them; the will, which is the proper seat of thankfulness; the affections, love, desire, joy, confidence, all must be actuated, that our praises may be cordial, vocal, vital. Under the law, in the peace-offering thereof, God called for the fat and inwards; and so likewise in the peace-offerings of the gospel, God calls for the inward man, the heart and soul: and indeed a godly man's work lies most within doors, he is more taken up with his own heart, than with all the world besides; neither can he ever be alone, so long as he hath God and his own soul to converse with. David's harp was not oftner out of tune than his heart, which here he is setting right, that he might make the better melody to the Lord.

Verse 9. "*Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over: that they turn not again to cover the earth.*" This setting bounds to the waters, is an argument of God's power, of his great power and providence: the waters of affliction are often gathered together against the godly; but by God's gracious appointment they have evermore their set bounds put to them, which they may not pass. The rock of eternity whereupon we are fixed, is above all billows: washed

washed we may be, as St Paul was in the shipwreck, drowned we cannot be, because in the same bottom with Christ, who hath here set bounds to the sea, that it cannot pass.

Verse 13. “ *He watereth the hills from his chambers: the earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works.*” As our being, so the means of it doth depend upon God’s providence; he must feed us, we cannot feed ourselves: the eyes of all things wait upon him, and he fills all things with plenteousness. We must not therefore rely upon ourselves, nor sacrifice to our own net. It is a vain thing to rise up early and sit up late, if the blessing of God be not upon our labours. Neither are we to distrust his providence for any of these outward means. He that clotheth the grass of the field, and feedeth the fowls of the air, shall he not much more provide for us, for whose sake the rest were created; let me tell you from sweet experience: he is a God, and therefore able; a Father, and therefore willing to supply our necessities; let us lay aside therefore all anxious vexing care, and rest wholly upon him with contentment of mind, whatever the estate be in which we are.

Verse 32. “ *He looketh on the earth and it trembleth; he toucheth the hills and they smoke.*” — It is a constant universal effect of the sight of God, this quaking and trembling, and what is the reason that the whole creation so shivers and shakes? the reason is, the Lord looks upon them, the eye of God is over the hearts of

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men, which makes them exceedingly to tremble and quake : and certainly, if men did but seriously think upon this truth, that they are always in God's sight, it would be a very forcible inducement to deter them from sin.— If thou wilt needs sin, saith St Augustine, find out some place where God is not, and sin there, and then thou wilt never sin.

P S A L M CV.

Verse 3. “ *Glory ye in his holy name : let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord.*” If thou be dejected and depressed with the weight of thy sins; if the malediction, and curses of God's judgment upon sinners lie heavy upon thee, raise thyself from it as fast as thou canst, for it is a grave that will putrify, corrupt, and moulder away thy soul apace: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord. Thou art not in the right way of finding the Lord, if thou dost not find a joy in seeking him.— Although thou canst not settle thyself in a sense that thou hast found him, yet thou hast if thou canst find an holy melting and joy in seeking him.

Verse 25. “ *He turned their heart to hate his people, to deal subtilly with his servants.*” The changes of affection are from God. When Moses describes the cruel usage of the Egyptians towards the people of Israel, he tells us here, God turned their hearts to hate his people, which seems an hard word to say, God turned their hearts, God did not drop hatred into

into their hearts; God turns the heart from sin, not to sin; but he is therefore said to turn their hearts to hate his people, because he gave them up to the baseness and suspiciousness of their own hearts, which told them how the Israelites would bring them low, unless themselves were brought low by an imposition of new burthens: this was enough, and this was all that God did when he turned the hearts of the Egyptians to hate his people; unless God hold our hearts, and keep them for us, we are not only unready in every duty to God and man, but we act quite contrary to our duty: we love where we should hate, and hate where we should love; we help those we should oppose, and oppose those to whom we should be helpful.

Verse 31. *“ He spake, and there came divers sorts of flies, and lice in all their coasts.”* Lice abound every where, and make no difference between beggars and princes. How are the great wonder-mongers of Egypt abashed, that they can neither make lice of their own, nor deliver themselves from the lice that were made: now Pharaoh must needs see how impotent a Devil he served, that could not make that vermin which every day rises out of corruption: and besides these lice there were flies, the frogs creep upon their cloaths, the lice upon their skins, and those stinging hornets that sucked them, shall wound and kill: the water was annoyed with the first plague, the earth with the second and third; the fourth fills the

air, and besides corruption, brings smart; and that they may see this winged army comes from an angry God, (not either from nature or what is called chance) even the very flies shall make a difference betwixt Egypt and Goshen: they can no more sting an Israelite than favour an Egyptian: the very wings of flies are directed by a providence, and do acknowledge their limits. Now Pharaoh finds how impossible it is for him to stand out with God, since all his power cannot rescue him from lice and flies.

Verse 40. *“ The people asked, and he brought quails, and satisfied them with the bread of heaven.”*

They ask meat, and receive quails, they desired bread, and receive manna: to find quails in a wilderness was unusual, but for bread to come down from heaven was yet more so; if they had partook of the coarsest flesh, and basest pulse, hunger would have made it dainty; but now God will pamper their famine, and gives them meat of kings, and bread of angels:—what a world of quails were but sufficient to serve 600000 persons: what a table hath God prepared in the desert, for abundance, for delicacy: never was any prince so served in his greatest pomp, as these rebellious Israelites in the wilderness: God loves to over-deserve of men, and to exceed not only their sins, but their very desires in mercy: how good shall we find him to them that please him, since he is so gracious to offenders. If the most graceless Israelite be fed with quails and manna, O what goodness is that which he hath laid up
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for them that love him. O Lord, thou canst, thou wilt make this difference; and if thy mercy sometimes provoke the worst to repentance by thy temporal favour; yet thou ever reservest so much greater reward for the righteous, as eternity is beyond time, and heaven above earth.

P S A L M C VI.

Verse 6. “ *We have sinned with our fathers; we have committed iniquity; we have done wickedly.*” Let not any turn this into a stubborn resolution, and say, we will err with our fathers; they who will do as their fathers, may suffer with their fathers; they who will needs err by their father’s copy, may go to hell by their father’s copy: the fathers are but children when they err, and they who will err with their fathers are worse than children. Let us consider therefore to what antiquity we appeal before we stand to it: many practices are very old, yet very erroneous: many old sayings and old doings must be unsaid and undone, or we shall be undone for ever: as we must take heed of novelties, so we must be cautious about antiquities: old fables and young fancies are are with me at the same rate; no man having drank old wine, straight calls for new: old is better than new, if it be as good as new; but any new truth is better than the oldest error; and every error the older it is, the worse it is

Verse 23. “ *Therefore he said that he would destroy them, had not Moses his chosen stood before him*

him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them." Good men turn away wrath, they stand in the gap, and divert the displeasure of God against a city or nation.— Their persons are in acceptance with heaven: God will look upon them, and do much for them, when he is most angry of all with the wicked their prayers also are prevalent, the Lord will yield much to them, when most bitterly bent against a people. As one sinner may destroy much good, so one praying saint may save a whole country.

Verse 45. "*And he remembered for them his covenant, and repented according to the multitude of his mercies.*" All transactions and covenants between God and man are conditional, and where men will not be bound, God will not be bound neither: if man persist in a habit and purpose of sinning, God will study a judgment against that man; and do that, even in Israel, which shall make all our ears tingle, and all our hearts to ache: till that man repent, God will not, and when he does, God will repent too. For though God be not man, that he can repent, yet that God, who for man's sake become man, for our sakes, and his own glory, will so far become man again, as upon man's true repentance, to repent the judgments intended against that man, by changing his severity into clemency. So that God's repentance is not a changing of his will, but of his work.

PSALM

P S A L M CVII.

Verse 8. “ *Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness and for his wonderful works to the children of men!*” O that men would praise the Lord, is David’s provocation to us all; but how? O that men would therefore praise the Lord, and declare his wonderful works that he hath done for the sons of men: but not to go about to declare his unrevealed decrees, or secret purposes, is as good a way of praising him as the other: O that men would therefore praise the Lord so, forbear his majesty when he is retired into himself in his decrees, and magnify his majesty, as he manifests himself to us in the execution of those decrees.

Verse 13. “ *Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them in their distress.*” The Lord knows how to strike us so, as that we shall lay hold upon the hand that strikes us, and kiss the hand that wounds us: no man kills his enemy, that his enemy might have a better life in heaven; that is not his end in killing him, it is God’s end; therefore he brings us to death, that by such a gate he might lead us into life everlasting: he hath made that northern passage, to pass by the frozen sea of calamity and tribulation to paradise, to the heavenly Jerusalem; there are fruits that ripen not, but by frost; there are natures, (and indeed scarce any other) that dispose not themselves to God but by affliction.

Verse 19. “ *Then they cry unto the Lord in
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their trouble, he saveth them out of their distresses." The way to be delivered is first to be troubled, for a troubled soul or conscience, is like a troubled sea after a tempest; the danger is past, but yet the billow is great still: the danger was in the calm, in the security; or in the tempest, by misrepresenting God's corrections to our obduration, and to a remorseless stupefaction; but when a man is come to this holy vexation, to be troubled, to be shaken with a sense of the indignation of God, the storm is past, and the indignation of God is blown over: that soul is in a fair and near way of being restored to a calmness, and to a reposed security of conscience, that is come to this holy vexation.

Verse 40. "*He poureth contempt upon princes, and causeth them to wander in the wilderness, where there is no way.*" Men of high places lie open to greivous judgments as well as others; all sorts of men, high and low, rich and poor, noble and ignoble, shall taste of the punishments of God for sin: this the prophet pointeth unto, when he saith, God poureth contempt upon princes: and if we would enter into a consideration of examples, we have a plurality of testimonies in the word of God: of Abimelech, the king of Gerar; Pharoah, king of Egypt; Senacherib, king of Ashur; Herod, king of Judea; and sundry princes and nobles, who have tasted of the judgments of God, punishing them for their sins, and rewarding them according to their iniquities: neither
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can we marvel at this dealing of God, if we consider that he is no acceptor of any man's person, and is sufficiently able to make all men stoop under his hand; which may serve to instruct princes to be subject to God, and to obey him in all things, seeing God will require the breach of his law at their hands: all superiors and governors over others, must look for God's wrath to fall upon them, whensoever they walk in evil ways, and transgress against God's commandments; all their power and policy, all their armies, and kingcraft, cannot save them.

P S A L M CVIII.

Verse 12. *"Give us help from trouble; for vain is the help of man."* Some think that the psalmist here complains of the sad condition of the Israelites, after that Saul was slain in mount Gilboah, and the Philistines tyrannizing at their pleasure; so that vain was the help of man, as the Israelites had now proved in Saul, a king of their own choosing, but not able to save them from those proud Philistines: no more could the Romans the Britons, oppressed by their northern enemies; they sent to the Roman provest of Gaul, and thus complained to him, The barbarous enemy beateth us to the sea, the sea beateth us back to the enemy; between these two kinds of death we shall be either murdered or drowned; but their intreaties did not prevail. The saint's comfort is, that where human help fails, divine begins.

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When our father and mother forsake us, then
God takes us up.

P S A L M CIX.

Verse 5. “ *And they have rewarded me evil for good, and hatred for my love.*” They to whom we have done many good turns, turn many times not only from us, but against us, and shew themselves not only no friends, but enemies: when friends dislike in their love, they incline to hatred; and while they are not with us, they may be numbered with those that are against us; of such David complains here: for my love: they were my adversaries: none prove worse enemies than those that have received the greatest kindneses when once they turn unkind: as the sharpest vinegar is made of the purest wine; and pleasant meats turn to the bitterest humours in the stomach, so the highest love bestowed upon friends, being ill digested or corrupted, turns to the most unfriendly hatred: the dissensions of brethren are hottest, because they are nearest; and the dissension of friends is hotter than that of brethren, because the love of brethren, strictly considered, is founded only in nature, but the love of friends is founded in courtesies, and professions, which though not in themselves, yet to us, because we have been active or receptive in them, are the closest obligations to love.

Verse 27. “ *That they may know that this is thy hand, that thou, Lord, hast done it.*” This is peculiar to the children of God, that when the
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hand of God is upon them, they shall know it to be the hand of God, and take hold even of that oppressive heavy hand, and not let it go, till they have received a blessing from it; that is, raised themselves, even by that oppressing hand of God's, in that affliction. When God shall fill their faces with shame, yet they shall seek his face: yea, when God shall kill them, yet will they trust in him, and seek their God: in a word, they shall find the hand of God upon them in their adversity, and love it, because it shall deliver them; again, they shall feel his hand in prosperity likewise, and be afraid of it, because that prosperity hath been before, and may again lead them into temptations.

P S A L M CX.

Verse 2. “ *The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.*” The rod of Christ's power is the power of his word, which works both in them that are saved, and in them that perish: there are two sorts of men under the scepter and kingdom of Christ; the one loyal subjects, the other traitors and rebels; to the first this rod is a sceptre of gold to govern them; to the other a sceptre of iron to destroy them; and however, words many times seem but wind, yet this wind of the Lord oftentimes doth astonish the hearts of such reprobates: this is the rod of Christ's power, this is the power of his word, let us not resist it, let us not despise

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it, lest the judgment thereof fall upon us, as the stone of a mighty rock to grind us to powder. Let us not deceive ourselves, we are but flesh, the edge of Christ's sword will easily pierce us; we are but dust and ashes, the breath of his displeasure will easily blow us away.

Verse 4. "*The Lord hath sworn and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.*" What doctrine doth the scripture afford more comfortable to a drooping soul than this? that God hath sworn his Son a priest for ever, to sanctify our persons, to purge our sins, and tender all our petitions to his Father: we may be sure, God will not be hard to be intreated of us, who himself hath appointed us such an intercessor, to whom he can deny nothing; and to that end hath appointed him to sit at his right hand to make intercession for us.

P S A L M CXI.

Verse 4. "*He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered: the Lord is gracious and full of compassion.*" The sweet spices of divine works must be beaten to powder by meditation, and then laid up in the cabinet of our memories: therefore, saith the psalmist here, God hath made his wonderful works to be remembered: he gives us the jewels of deliverances not (because they are common) to wear them on our shoes, as the Romans did their pearls; much less to tread them under our feet, but rather to tie them as a chain about our necks. The
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impression of God's marvellous acts upon us, must not be like that which the stone makes in the water, raising circles, beating one wave upon another, and for a time making a noise, but soon after it sinks down, and the water returneth to its former smoothness: and so we, while judgment is fresh, we publish it from man to man, and soon after let it sink into the depth of oblivion, and we return to our old sins.

Verse 8. "*They stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness.*" All the works of the Lord are done in truth; as the word of God is a word of truth, so all his works are works of truth: for his works are nothing else, but the making good of his word, and answerable to a threefold word of his:—first, to his word of prophecy, whatsoever changes God makes in the world, they hit some word of prophocy: secondly, the works of God are answerable to his word of threatning, God threatens before he smites, and he never smote any man with a rod, a sword, but according to his threatning: thirdly, the works of God are answerable to his word of promise; all mercies are promised, and every work of mercy is the fulfilling of some promise. Now seeing, all the works of God are reduceable, either to prophecies, threatnings, or promises; they are done in truth. Grace and truth by Christ, is the sum of all the good news in the world.

PSALM

P S A L M CXII.

Verse 2. "*His seed shall be mighty upon earth: the generation of the upright shall be blessed.*"—

Children are the heritage of the Lord, and the reward he sometimes gives to the upright:—this is that blessedness David promiseth here, to the man that fears the Lord, his seed shall be mighty: some men count children bills of charges, but God puts them on the account of mercies. That was a pretty answer which Cornelia gave a noble lady, who lodging in her house, shewed her all her jewels, with a desire to see her riches: she bringing forth her children, which were newly come from school, said, these are my only treasure.

Verse 4. "*Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness: he is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous.*" The day, that in the creation first sprang from the night, may here fitly be applied to the upright; there ariseth the light of comfort sometimes in, always after, nay, out of the darkness of his sorrow. It was a pretty device of one Senzaro, an Italian, who, having been long in love, and much crossed, filled a pot full of little black stones, and one white, saying, there will come one white day, (meaning that of marriage) which will make amends for all my black days. Let the upright comfort himself in this assurance: that although the kalender of his life may be full of miserable days, yet the day of his death shall be full of joy, and the end of his life a beginning of that bless which shall never end.

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Verse 9. "*He hath dispersed; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness endureth for ever; his horn shall be exalted with honour.*" Rich men should be ready to distribute, willing to communicate; but it falls out otherwise; for commonly, the richer the harder; and those that should be as clouds to water the earth, as a common blessing, are either waterless clouds, (as St Jude hath it) or at the best they are but as waterpots, to water a few spots of ground only in a small garden. The earth is God's purse, and rich men's houses are his store-houses. This the righteous rich man knoweth, therefore (as a steward from God) he disperseth to the poor, and his righteousness (and his riches too) endureth for ever: whereas the wicked rich man retaineth his fulness to rot with him; he feedeth upon earth like a serpent, and striveth like a toad, to die with much mould in his mouth: this man is bid by St James to weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon him, for his cursed hoard of evil gotten, and worse kept goods: the rottenness of his riches, the moth of his garments, shall be a witness against him, and eat up his flesh as fire, James, v. 1.

P S A L M CXIII.

Verse 7. "*He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dung-hill.*" They that are low and mourning, are nearest to exaltation and safety: to be very low, is to be as it were in a due posture and readiness to be

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exalted

exalted very high. He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble and the meek, Luke vii. which we are not to understand only of those that are low, that is lowly in mind ; but we may understand it likewise of those who are low in their estates, (many that are low in mind may be high in place ; a man may have great humility in the height of outward eminency ;) therefore we must take in both the senses :— which should be a great comfort to us, when we consider that our low estate should be so far from sinking, that it should raise our faith in believing deliverance and exaltation ; remembering always this truth, that our extremity is God's opportunity ; then he is most ready when we have most need.

P S A L M CXIV.

Verse 1. “ *When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language.*” Israel's bondage in Egypt, in a lively manner represents our miserable thralldom under Satan and sin : the black darkness over all the land of Egypt, was no darkness in comparison of the kingdom of darkness ; out of which our blessed Saviour hath brought us into marvellous light : the Devil is the prince of darkness ; hell is a pit of darkness ; sin is a work of darkness. But all the redeemed of the Lord have light where they dwell : God's word is a lanthorn unto their feet ; his commandments, a light to their eyes ; his spirit, an illuminator

to their understanding; their works are called armour of light; and themselves honestly walking as in the day, children of light, John xii. The king of Egypt and his people so vexed God's Israel, that they made them weary of their lives, by sore labour in mortar and brick, with all manner of slavery, so the Devil and his accomplices have cast insupportable burthens on the sons of men: but Christ, our true Joshua, saith unto Jacob's house, "*come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will ease you.*" Divines observe three kinds of burthens upon the text, the burthen of affliction, of the law, and of sin. In this Egypt of the world, great travel and trouble is created for all men; every son of Adam is born to labour and sorrow; in labour to his actions, to sorrow in his passions: as Israel went through Egypt, and the wilderness into the land of promise; so we must of necessity pass through many tribulations into the kingdom of God, which is our heavenly Canaan: now if we look unto Jesus the founder and finisher of our faith, he will in this world afford us, as he did Moses upon the top of Pisgah, a sight of the promised land, making it ours in hope, though as yet not in hold, bringing us to the resolution of St Paul, Rom. viii. I count that the afflictions are not worthy of the glory which shall be revealed unto us hereafter.—As for the burthen of the law, which is a yoke of bondage grievous and heavy to be borne, Christ caseth us of that also, being made under
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the law, Gal. iv. 4. Lastly, touching sin, he who knew no sin, hath made himself sin for us, that we should be made the righteousness of God in him, 2 Cor. v. The Lord saith, (Micah vii.) according to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt, will I shew marvellous things. Now when Israel went out of Egypt, he did overturn the chariots and horsemen, and destroyed all the host of their enemies in the midst of the sea; so likewise will he subdue our iniquities which are our greatest enemies, and cast them all into the bottom of the sea, that they never confound our souls in this world, nor condemn them in the next.

P S A L M CXV.

Verse 1. *“ Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truths sake.”* There is a natural disposition in the creature to seek himself, his own ends and glory in every thing; therefore the psalmist cries here, not unto us, O Lord, not unto us: and Christ teacheth all that are his followers, to lay down all self-ends at his feet, and to seek him and his honour, so that whatsoever the christian doth, it is for Christ, that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, Theff. i. 12, and why? we are not our own, but we are bought with a price, therefore we are to glorify God in our bodies and spirits, 1 Cor. vi. 19, and say with the royal prophet here, not unto us, O Lord: we must deny ourselves, all our gifts and graces;
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by doing all for God and not for ourselves, for his glory and not our own : and again, as we are to deny our gifts and graces in respect of the means, by referring all to God, and not to ourselves, to his strength and assistance, and not our own : as we must do all things for God as the end, so also we must refer all things to him as the means, acknowledging ourselves to do all things in his strength, and by his assistance.

Verse 17. “ *The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence.*” David considers not here what men do, or not do in the next world; but he considers only, that in this world he was bound to propagate God’s truth; which he could not do, if God took him away by death: there is a double reason given of David and other holy men that deprecated death in the Old Testament: first, in relation to themselves, because Moses had conveyed to those men all God’s future blessings, all the joy and glory of heaven, only in the types of earthly things, and said little of the state of the soul after this life, therefore the promises belonging to the godly after this life were not so clear, that in contemplation of them they could deliver themselves confidently into the jaws of death: he that is not fully satisfied of the next world, will be contented with this : the other reason was, because God had a great harvest in hand, and few labourers in his vineyard, therefore were loath to be taken from the work; and this reason was not in relation to themselves,

themselves, but God's church, that they should not be able to do God's cause any more good here: *Quid facies nomini tuo*, saith Joshua, in his prayer to God; if the Canaanites come in and destroy us, and blaspheme thee, what wilt thou do unto thy mighty name? what wilt thou do unto thy glorious church? said the saints of God under the Old Testament, if thou take those men out of the world, whom thou hast chosen, enabled, qualified, for the edification sustenance, and propagation of the church? upon this account David desired to live, not for his own sake, but God's glory, and his church's good: neither of which could be advanced by him, being dead.

P S A L M CXVI.

Verse 7. *“ Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.”* A believer, like Noah's dove, finds no rest all the world over for the feet of his soul: until he returns to Christ, which is his ark of safety and salvation: therefore after all his flights and flutterings among the creatures, he says with the psalmist here, return unto thy rest, (thy Christ) O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee; thou hast been abroad in the world, and that like a narrow-hearted master, deals niggardly with thee: if thou shouldest stay long, either in the service of, or dependance upon the world; the world would starve thee, therefore return unto thy rest in
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the Lord, for the Lord will yet deal more bountifully with thee, O my soul.

Verse 9. “ *I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living.*” That is, by continuing in this world I shall have opportunity of doing God service: the religious man rejoices to live, that he may walk before the Lord, and live unto him in the place where he hath set him: indeed that joy, hope, and desire of life, which is founded upon this consideration, is not only lawful but commendable; and truly, here is a vast difference betwixt the wicked and the godly: to walk in the land of the living is the wicked man’s desire; yea, were it possible, he would walk here for ever; but for what end? only to enjoy his lusts, have his fill of pleasure, and encrease his wealth: whereas the aim of the godly man in desiring to live, is, that he may walk before God, advance his glory, and perform his service: upon this account it is, that one doth fitly take notice, that David doth not say, I shall now satiate myself in my royal city; but I shall walk before the Lord in the land of the living.

P S A L M CXVII.

Verse 1. “ *O praise the Lord, all ye nations: praise him all ye people.*” The praise of God is here made both the beginning and end of the psalm; to shew, that in praising God the saints are unsatisfied; and would be infinite, as God’s perfections are infinite: therefore David in the last psalm hath said, “ *let every thing that hath breath,*

breath, praise the Lord;" so in all likelihood had made an end, yet he repeats the hallelujah again, and cries, "*praise ye the Lord.*" The psalmist had made an end, and yet he had not done; to signify, that when we have said our utmost for God's praise, we must rest unsatisfied, and begin anew: and indeed, there is hardly any duty more pressed in the Old Testament upon us, though less practised, than this of praising God: to quicken us therefore to so necessary, but much neglected duty, this and many other psalms were penned by David, purposely to excite us, that are the nations here meant, to consecrate our whole lives to the singing and setting forth of God's worthy praises.

Verse 2. "*For his merciful kindness is great towards us: and the truth of the Lord endureth for ever. Praise ye the Lord.*". Here and in divers other psalms, God's mercy and truth are joined together: to shew, that all passages and proceedings, both ordinantial and providential, whereby he cometh and communiceth himself to his people, are not only mercy (though it is very sweet) but truth; they come to them in the way of a promise from God, as bound to them by the truth of his covenant: this is soul-satisfying indeed, this turns all that a man hath to cream, when every mercy is a present sent from heaven, by virtue of a promise: — upon this account God's mercy is ordinarily in the psalms bounded by his truth; that none may either presume him more merciful than he

he hath declared himself in his word ; or else despair of finding mercy gratis, according to the truth of his promise : therefore, although thy sins be great, the mercy of God is greater: the high heaven covereth as well tall mountains as small mole-hills ; the more desperate thy disease is, the greater is the glory of thy physician, who hath perfectly cured thee.

P S A L M CXVIII.

Verse 8. "*It is better to trust in the Lord, than to put confidence in man.*" We may learn from this text, not to depend on vain things, as riches, friends, honours, policies, but on God, who is unchangeable and immoveable; true it is, we are not to refuse good means offered, and offered of God unto us, but are bound to use them as blessings and instruments, by which he will help us; but then we must trust not in the creature, but in the Creator himself, in whom only we must confess is the power to help. It is a great cause oftentimes why God blesteth not means, when we trust in them, robbing God of his glory, and not waiting for a blessing at his hands this causeth the Lord to cross us, and to curse his own benefits, because we seek not him, but sacrifice to our own nets, putting confidence in outward means; therefore when we hope for help from them, God bloweth upon them, and turneth them to our hurt and destruction.

Verse 9. "*It is better to trust in the Lord, than to put confidence in princes.*" This verse David

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thought worthy of repeating, for he saith it again in Psalm cxlvi. “ *put not your trust in princes;*” not that you may not trust their royal words, and gracious promises to you; not that you may not trust their counsels, and executing of those counsels, and the distributions of your contribution for those executions; not that you may not trust the managing of affairs of state in their hands, without jealous inquisitions, or misinterpretations of their actions: in these you must trust princes, and those great persons whom princes trust: but when these great persons are in the balance with God, then they must not be trusted.

P S A L M CXIX.

Verse 18. “ *Open thou mine eyes: that I may behold wonderful things out of thy law.*” As man hath not an eye to see the wonderful works of God spiritually, until it be given, so much less hath he an eye to see the wonders of the word of God, till it be given him from above: therefore David prays, open thou, &c. And if the wonderful things of the law are not much seen till God give an eye, then much less are the wonderful things of the gospel. The light of nature shews us somewhat of the law, but nothing of the gospel was ever seen by the light of nature: many who have seen and admired some excellencies in the law, could never see, and therefore have derided, that which is the excellency of the gospel, till God hath opened their hearts to understand it. We
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have nothing of our own but sin and ignorance; wisdom is from God; and as God hides all gospel-truths and mysteries from worldly wise men; so no gospel-mystery is known to any man till God discover and make it known.

Verse 14. “ *Thy testimonies also are my delight, and my counsellors.*” Though your proceedings be not either unconstant or uncomfortable, deliberate long before you resolve on any enterprize: advise with God, especially, who hath said, woe be to the rebellious children, who take counsel, but not of me, Isaiah, xxx. 1.—David had able counsellors about him; but those he most esteemed and made use of were God’s testimonies in this text, thy testimonies are my delight, and the men of my counsel. The princes of old had learned men ever with them, called remembrancers, monitors, counsellors: as Themistocles had his Anaxagoras; Alexander his Aristotle; Scipio his Panætius, and Polybius, of which latter Pausanias testifieth, that he was so great a politician, that what he advanced never miscarried: but we have a better example here, even the royal prophet, whom in all his straits, asked counsel of the Lord, and he always answered him to purpose, and advised (you may be sure) for the best: let us do so, and God will not fail us: for he hath made his Son, not only righteousness and salvation, but also wisdom to us, and our wonderful counsellor.

Verse 25. “ *My soul cleaveth unto the dust:—*

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quicken thou me according to thy word." Many when they hear of a promise think to have it by and by; but they mark not that a promise and the fruition of it, is not always to be expected instantly, or all at once; for the Lord will make them fit before they enjoy it: this causeth many to fall from the promises which seemed to believe, because they have not help at the first: but the children of God melt and cleave to the dust, they yet trust in God and wait on him, and feel comfort: others in the beginning of trouble, pray and wait a little, but if help come not quickly, then they cast all away: but the child of God hath a patient spirit, and therefore feeleth comfort: he marketh the deliverance of others, and hopeth for the same, and so waiteth still on God: the nature of man is ready to trust in means so long as he hath them; therefore God pulleth all means from us, that we may only trust in him: let us think that God hath delivered others, therefore he will deliver us; he hath delivered David, therefore my trust is, he will deliver me.

Verse 31. "*I have stuck unto thy testimonies:—O Lord, put me not to shame.*" The protestation of David's former affection is amplified by this; that as he had once chosen the testimonies of God, so by a constant affection he cleaved unto them. David was no temporizer to make choice of the word to-day, and reject it to-morrow; as were those Jews, who for a time rejoiced in the light of the gospel, brought to
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them by the Baptist, and after rejected his testimony: true godliness never wants upon her head the garland of perseverance. I have fought a good fight, saith St Paul to Timothy; I have finished my course; and henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of glory: if we will wear the crown, we must finish the course, we must so run that we may obtain, and that is to the end of the race; he must carry his goodness to his grave, who will have that goodness, through Christ's merits carry him to heaven.

Verse 32. "*I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart.*" David's affection towards God's word is amplified by this, that as in the former verse he had cleaved unto it, so in this he promiseth with joy and alacrity to continue in it, which is expressed here by the word running: but alas! we run not with David: O that we could halt to Canaan with Jacob, or at least creep forwards like children to our father's house! but many instead of running lie down, or which is worse, go back again, like carnal Israelites to their flesh-pots: for whom it had been better never to have gone towards Canaan.

Verse 38. "*Stablish thy word unto thy servant, who is devoted to thy fear.*" He who hath received from the Lord grace to fear him with love, may be bold to seek any necessary good thing of him; because the fear of God hath annexed the promises of all other blessings with it: sometimes David brings the reason of
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his petition from the Lord, as from his mercy and truth: sometimes from himself, as from this, that he trusts in the Lord, verse 42, or that he fears God, as here; or that he hath a great desire towards God, verse 40. By which we are given to understand, that all the promises of God are conditional; if the condition be no way in us, how shall the promises be performed unto us. It is true, the Lord is gracious and merciful, ready to forgive, &c. but what is that to thee, who repentest not, believest not, lovest him not, and trustest not in him.

Verse 47. “ *And I will delight myself in thy commandments which I have loved.*” It is no small progress in godliness to delight in the commandments of God: our corrupt nature counts them burthenfome; but the grace of Christ makes us find his yoke easy and his burthen light and indeed, so do his children esteem it, who have found by experience, there is more solid joy in the obedience of God’s commandments, than in all the perishing pleasures of sin: but this is not felt by natural men, who do some external works of God’s worship, but not with an inward delight; and therefore this is no acceptable service to God: they assemble themselves on the sabbath with the servants of God to hear his word, and perchance to receive the sacrament: but what the one doth of delight, the other doth of custom and compulsion, the Lord looks to the affection more than the action, and we should

should not only consider what we do, but how we do it: so to come to the temple like old Simeon, by motion of the spirit; so to hear the word, that it be with spiritual joy and delight, as David did. This condemns those of our age, to whom God's word is a reproach and weariness.

Verse 49. “*Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.*”——It was the practice of God's saints and children, most of all to plead God's word and promise in time of trouble: David pleads it here, for himself when he was in deep afflictions:—Moses pleads it for the children of Israel, when God was so incensed against them, that he threatened to consume them, *Exod. xxxii. 13.* And the reasons are, first, in respect of ourselves, because we have no help in ourselves; our condition may be so low, that we may say with Jehoshaphat, *2 Chron. xx.* We know not, O Lord what to do, but our eyes are towards thee. Secondly, we may be forsaken of all others, as Israel was in Egypt, and then our eyes must be fixed on God's promise.—Lastly, when all fail us, we might sink into despair, had not God often promised to make good his word unto us, therefore we have need to plead that most when we need it most: men seek not to their confederates for help till they have need, and then they claim it as due by promise and league; so we must in our greatest miseries cry out most earnestly,—
“*Remember*

“ Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.”

Verse 54. *“ Thy statutes have been my song in the house of my pilgrimage.”* See how the Lord in his wise dispensations, suits himself to our infirmities: our life is subject to many changes; and God by his word hath provided for us also many instructions and remedies: every cross hath its own remedy, and every state of life its own instruction: sometimes our grief may be so great that we cannot sing, then let us pray: sometimes our deliverance so joyful, that we must break out into thanksgivings then let us sing: If any man among you, says the Apostle, be afflicted, let him pray; if any be merry, let him sing: prayers for every cross, and praise for every deliverance, hath God by his own spirit penned unto us; so that now we are more than inexcusable if we fail in this duty.

Verse 75. *“ I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.”* When God strikes his friends, he is their friend still, when he afflicts, it is in faithfulness: he is good to us when he sends us evil, and he sends us evil for our good: to be smitten by a friend, whose very smiting is friendship, and who heals us by wounding, cannot be offensive: hence David's choice, let us now fall into the hands of the Lord, for his mercies are great, and not into the hands of men, 2 Sam. xxiv. David knew that God useth affliction as a remedy against sin, and as he sheweth

sheweth his ~~mercy~~, in that by afflictions he cureth them.

Verse 76. “ *Let, I pray thee, thy merciful kindness be for my comfort, according to thy word unto thy servant.* ” We must labour to cure our unbelief by God’s promise, that we fall not into despair: for we are ready to presume in prosperity, or to despair in trouble; but they must be both cured, the one by the meditation of God’s judgments in prosperity; the other by his promises in trouble: the judgments have done with us, when they have brought us to humble ourselves to the Lord because of our sin; and then we are to look for his mercy, for then are we fit for it: we must then couple justice and mercy together, and make use of both.

Verse 82. “ *Mine eyes fail for thy word, saying, When wilt thou comfort me.* ” It is a usual manner of God’s dealing with his children, to delay the answer of their prayers, and suspend the performance of his promises: not because he is unwilling to give, but because he will have them better prepared to receive: God is slow to give, that we should not seek slowly, but be instant and fervent in prayer, which is most acceptable to God, and profitable to ourselves.

Verse 83. “ *For I am become like a bottle in the smoke: yet do I not forget thy statutes.* ” A bottle in the smoke, is made very dry in time by the heat thereof, as coming from the fire, although not very great, by this is meant, that
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through long continuance of troubles, he was in danger of having all spiritual moisture dried up in him; wherein the life of piety consisteth; but yet he continued constant in the exercise of religion still; for grace is oftentimes set forth, by water that never faileth in the driest times: a notable example for our imitation, even when our afflictions continue without end: not to be discouraged in the ways of godliness, much less to despair: God's rod may be sharp, but his way is mercy; he may appear to his children, as Joseph did to his brethren, speak roughly to them, and make himself strange towards them, but his loving affection shall not always be hid from them.

Verse 86. "*All thy commandments are faithful: they persecute me wrongfully; help thou me.*"—Prophane politicians think that a man is weak when he is driven to God for help; but indeed, then he is strongest when he is weakest in himself, and seeks help in his God: so long as we depend on the arm of flesh, whether it be our own or others, the Lord will do less for us; but when distrusting ourselves we rely upon him, then is he strongest to work for us: upon this ground it was, that David here spake, I know thy commandments are true, and they cannot be deceived who depend upon them; nor yet prosper that are against them: he shall never want comfort in trouble, that rests himself, and builds upon God's word.

Verse 105. "*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*" To his feet not his eyes

eyes alone : if we use the word of God only to gaze on, it wants its use, and we want our goodness, and shall want our glory: God's word was a light to David, to guide him in all his actions, both inward and outward, of heart and tongue, and hand. A true child of God does not go a step further than the light goes before him, nor will he refuse to go wheresoever this lamp leadeth him: therefore, let us often ask our soul these questions ; before whom do I walk? at whose command am I? what are my ways? doth the spirit or the flesh govern me? is carnal reason or God's word my rule? and let this text inform us, that the character of a true saint is to be such as walketh before God, avoiding what he forbiddeth, performing what he commandeth : and so making his law the rule and square of all his actions; and be assured, only they that walk before God now, shall with joy appear before him hereafter; and only they who make his word a light unto their paths in this life, shall have the light of glory to guide them in the next.

Verse 116 “ *Uphold me according unto thy word, that I may live: and let me not be ashamed of my hope.*” Which of us, O God, dare ever hope to aspire unto thy graces without thy assistance? which of us can promise to secure ourselves from eternal destruction, if thou dost not guide our steps, and order all our goings? We fall, O God, we fall to the lowest hell, if thou prevent us not, if thou sustain
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us not: uphold thou me therefore according to thy word, that I may live: all our weakness is in ourselves, all our strength is in thee: O God, be thou strong in our weakness, that our weakness may be ever steady in thy strength.

Verse 120. “ *My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments.*” Christ in his first coming was a lamb, but in his second he shall be a lion: hence it is, that the very best of saints tremble at the apprehension of the day of judgment: David was a man after God’s own heart, yet this text informs us in what a condition he was, when he thought upon this day. Job was a man eminent for all graces, yet he stood amazed at the consideration of this judge: Paul was a chosen vessel, one that knew nothing by himself, yet saith he, I am not thereby justified, for it is the Lord that judgeth me: St Jerome confesseth that his whole body trembled so oft as he thought upon this day: many there are who pass current in the judgment of the world, who, when they shall be weighed in Christ’s balances, will be found too light: good reason than hath every man to pray, as the church teaches him, “ *in the day of judgment, good Lord deliver us.*”

Verse 139. “ *My zeal hath consumed me; because mine enemies have forgotten thy words.*”—Zeal is a divine grace, grounded upon the knowledge of God’s word, which inflameth all the desires and affections of the soul, in the
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right worship of the true God; and constantly stirreth them up to the preserving, advancing, and vindicating God's honour, by all lawful means within the compass of our calling.— Now all men pretend to zeal, the cholerick and furious, the quarrellsome and contentious, the malicious and envious, the jealous and superstitious, the proud self-admirer, and indiscreet church-robber, the exorbitant zealot, nay, the seditious incendiary, all pretend to zeal: but all these claimers are disapproved by this definition of zeal: zeal is a divine gift, or grace of the spirit of God; no natural or moral temper, much less any unnatural or vicious distemper can commend us, or our best actions, to God and man, as zeal doth.— The fire of zeal, like the fire which consumed Solomon's sacrifice, cometh down from heaven; and true zealots are not those salamanders that always live in the fire of hatred and contention, but seraphims, burning with the spiritual fire of divine love. If it be true zeal, then length of time, multitude of discouragements, falseness of men, deserting the cause, nor strength of oppositions will tire out a man's spirit. Zeal makes men resolute; difficulties are but whetstones to their fortitude, it steels men's spirits with an undaunted resolution: this was the zeal which burned in the disciples, Luke xxiv. that consumed David here, and dried up the very marrow of Christ.

Verse 147. “ *I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried: I hoped in thy word.* ” It is

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an argument of an heroic mind, to hope always; and of a pious mind, to place that hope in God: David says of himself here, I have hoped in thy word; we should add hope to hope, even when affliction is added to affliction. When external means are least, let thy confidence be greatest; for then God displayeth his power most; not at the beginning, but when things grow desperate, for this is the season of divine help. It is our great fault, that in dismal dangers, we open the eye of sense, and only pore upon the extremity of trouble; whereas it becomes a fault even then to open the eye of faith, and look upon the energy of God's power: thus let the depth of misery be an encouragement of our confidence, in as much as that is a time of deliverance.— When the night is at the darkest, we know day-break is nearest; the lowness of the ebb, argues the flowing of the tide to be at hand: so may we conclude divine succour approaching from the premises of a grievous calamity encompassing.

Verse 164. “ *Seven times a day do I praise thee; because of thy righteous judgments.*” Thanksgiving is a branch of prayer, which, like the leper in the gospel, turns back to God with a confession and annunciation of what the Lord hath done for us: and it is so necessary and essential a part of God's worship, that it is the very condition of the obligation, wherein God hath bound himself by his promise to hear us:—

“ *Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver*

deliver thee; and thou shalt praise me," Psalm I. So that if we praise him not, we break the covenant, and are usurpers upon all his blessings and deliverances.

Verse 173. "*Let thine hand help me; for I have chosen thy precepts.*" David having before made promises of thankfulness, seeks new help from God that he may perform them. Our sufficiency is not of ourselves but of God; to will and to do are both from him. In temporal things, men oftentimes take great pains with small profit: first, because they seek not to make their conscience good; next, because they crave not help from God: therefore they speed no better than Peter, who fished all night and caught nothing, till he cast his net in the name of the Lord. But in spiritual things we may far less expect to prosper, if we call not for God's assistance: the means will not profit us, unless God's blessing accompany them, and his hand work with them. There is preaching, enough of it, but for the most part without profit; there is prayer, but it prevails not; there is hearing of the word, but without edifying; and all because in spiritual exercises, instant prayer is not made unto God, that his hand may be with us to help us.

Verse 176. "*I have gone astray like a lost sheep: seek thy servant; for I do not forget thy commandments.*" There is not a more contemptible office than that of a shepherd: yet God disdaineth not to feed his flock, to guide, to govern, to defend them, to tend and take care

of them; and all this he hath tied himself by covenant to do: well therefore might David here confidently speak, “ *I have gone astray like a lost sheep: Lord seek thy servant;*” as God will most assuredly do: for none can take his sheep, his servants, out of his hands; nor can Christ, to whom God hath committed the care of his sheep, discharge his trust, should he suffer any of them to wander and perish, as they undoubtedly would if left to themselves: such is their sheepish simplicity, Isaiah, liii. 6. Therefore Christ’s left hand is under us, and his right hand over us, and both his hands about us, to clasp and hold us fast to himself. Let us ever remember this condition, that with David here, we forget not God’s commandments.

P S A L M CXX.

Verse 5. “ *Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar.*” “ *Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech,*” &c. that is with the sons and descendants of Ishmael, who have learned of their fathers to mock and persecute; “ *I dwell in the tents of Kedar,*” but what caused them to mock and persecute? was it any provocation that David had given them? No, for he saith in the next verse, I am for peace, (I would live quietly with all my heart,) but when I speak they are for war: a motion for peace, proves a provocation to war. Some will speak in a very disrespectful manner of those that never gave them any cause. Water
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runs clear till it is troubled and stirred by some outward violence; but the spirits of some men run muddy though nothing from without disturbs them: it is sinful to speak rashly or harshly, though we are provoked; what is it then to speak so, when we are not provoked?

Verse 6. “ *My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace.*” The length and continuance of an affliction is more grievous unto us, than the weight and burthen of it. David complains not here, that he had been amongst those that hated peace; but that he had dwelt long with them, he could not extricate himself from their company. Many are ready to say in these troublesome times, if we could but see an end of our troubles; if we thought there would be an end of these wars, we could the more cheerfully bear the expence both of our blood and treasure: when will there be an end? but what is all this length, to the endless length of those troubles, which are the portion of impenitent sinners? What will they say where good shall never be enjoyed, and evil for ever felt? how long will be the cry in hell for ever? how long shall we endure? when will this end be? no date, no period can be set to the how long of that misery: and this makes every moment of misery as miserable as eternity itself: and indeed every moment of an eternal misery hath an eternity in it; as every moment of eternal mercies is likewise an eternity of mercy.

P S A L M CXXI.

Verse 4. “ *Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.*” How happy is the condition of God’s children. The ungodly are like stragling chickens, often snatched up by the devouring kite, while the godly are close under the hen’s wings; those like stray-sheep, wander up and down, exposed to variety of dangers: while these, being under the shepherd’s care, feed securely. Indeed, no felicity like that which is to be found in God’s love; nor safety to that of his protection: — “ *Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep:*” that which Cain refused to be to his brother, God is to his servants, their keeper; yea, so watchful a keeper, that his eye is ever over them by day and night, it closeth not, no not so much as winketh; it sleepeth not by night, nor slumbreth by day; and therefore well may they lie down and sleep in peace, yea, rise up and walk without fear.

Verse 8. “ *The Lord shall preserve thy going out, and thy coming in, from this time forth and even for evermore.*” The preserving peace of God over man, especially over his own people, is a perpetual care: preservation is a continued act: if God should leave us one moment, and stop providence, creation would be dissolved: this continuance of his care is eminent towards his church. Isaiah xxvii. “ *Lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day;*” night and day divide all time between them, to do any thing night and
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and day, is to do it continually : further, his love is without intermission, that knows no stops, therefore his care is so too. His people's dangers are without intermission, therefore his preservation is so too. Enemies oppose his people without intermission, therefore he protects them so too. The Devil goeth about like a roaring lion, he is ever in motion, the destroyer and devourer of men: the care of Christ prompts him to a like vigilancy ; he goeth about preserving, his act of preservation runs parallel with that of the enemies opposition; and as the Devil destroys, so God preserves for ever and ever.

P S A L M CXXII.

Verse 6. “ *Pray for the peace of Jerusalem :— they shall prosper that love thee.*” How necessary it is to pray for peace, appears from the general use of peace in the world: for let the whole world be in thy consideration as one house ; and then consider in that, in the peaceful harmony of creatures, in the peaceful succession and connection of causes and effects, the peace of nature: let the nation where God hath blessed thee with a being, be the gallery, the best room of that house; and consider in the two walls of that house, the church and state, the peace of a royal and religious wisdom : let thine own family be a cabinet in this gallery; and find in all the boxes thereof, in the several duties of wife, and children, and servants; the peace of virtue, and of the father and mother of all virtues,

virtues, active discretion, passive obedience. And then, lastly, let thy own bosom be the box and reserve in this cabinet; then the best jewel in the best cabinet, and that in the best gallery of the best house that can be had; peace with the creature, peace in the church, peace in the state, peace in thy house, peace in thy heart, is a fair model of the heavenly Jerusalem, where there is no object but peace.

Verse 7. "*Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces.*" Where peace is planted in the borders, there is the flower of wheat, and when it is entertained within the walls, prosperity takes up her habitation within the palaces. Health is not more beneficial to the natural body, than peace to the politic. Peace is the nurse of piety, by it religion thrives and the church flourishes, as we read in Acts ix. When the unity of the spirit is so kept in the bonds of peace, that christians like those happy converts, Acts iv. are as it were one soul in so many bodies, there the Lord promiseth his blessings and life for evermore: and doubtless, it is to teach the world, that all earthly blessings are, as they were unblest, till peace be upon them; till then no enjoyment of any. For to have prosperity within the palaces, and not peace within the walls, is, at the best, but an uncertain possession of that which men call happiness, without enjoying it. Again, as prosperity without peace is but an uncertain felicity; so peace without prosperity, is but a secure possession of misery: for did we dwell
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in a barren defart, or a pestilential air, or under the north pole, we should find but cold comfort in our peace, and scarce worth the praying for.

P S A L M CXXIII.

Verse 1. *“Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens.”* Though God be every where, yet he is especially in heaven; and though he be in all places, so that where-soever God is, there is heaven, yet there is more in heaven than is common to all places. That is heaven properly, where the glory of God shines most, and where there is the special revealings of his honour and power; therefore it is called the habitation of his holiness and glory. Heaven is, as we may say, the place of God’s glorious residence: this heaven is not every where, for though God be every where yet God doth not manifest himself equally every where. God hath built heaven, as that great monarch spake, boasting of Babylon, Dan. iv. for the house of his kingdom, and the glory of his majesty, and from thence he both can and will do much for the relief of his poor oppressed: from thence he sends them help, and strikes a terror into their enemies; and therefore David is here said to lift up his eyes to God in the heavens.

P S A L M CXXIV.

Verse 4. *“Then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream hath gone over our soul.”* Persecu-
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tors are a rod, but in God's hand ; swelling waters but bounded by his commandment, thus far thou shalt go, and no further. Indeed, it is only an Almighty presence can command and still the proud waves. The story of Canutus, once king of England, is very memorable, who sitting at the time of low water by the river Thames, commanded the water that it should not come nigh him ; but the tide returning, ceased not to rise higher, till it wet his feet : he immediately went home, and set his crown upon the crucifix at Westminster. It is none but God can stay the course of the water ; and it is the same hand must stop the current of wicked men's fury against his people : thus God was with the three worthies, to quench the violence of the fire ; with Daniel, to stop the mouths of the lions, and with Jacob, to bridle his brother's envy.

Verse 8. *“ Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.”* A comfortable saying this ; for look at any thing in heaven and earth, that hath in it matter of strength and comfort, he that made them hath power to command all things in them for thy safety and good : he is a faithful helper, a very sure refuge in trouble : men may promise help and fail, but God will not. Secondly, he is a powerful helper : men would help oftentimes, but are weak and cannot, where the enemy hath fortified himself with advantages and resolutions ; but the Lord's name is a strong help

help. Lastly, here is a constant help: men are inconstant and fickle; one speech or suspicion may deceive many, even from following Christ himself; but the Lord helpeth constantly, our help is even in the name of the Lord: he is unchangeable, and in his goodness towards his children never weary of well-doing, as men are. Let therefore God's almighty power be the prop of our faith; he hath made heaven and earth, and therefore let all the creatures of heaven and earth rest upon him; commit we ourselves unto him, as unto a faithful Creator of infinite might and mercy; and say as those good souls of Ebenezer, hitherto hath God helped us; he hath and therefore he will.

P S A L M CXXV.

Verse 1. “ *They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever.* ” That which is destructive to others, shall not be hurtful to the church; let persecutions be as fire, yet the church is like Moses's bush, which was burnt but not consumed; let them be as the waters, the church shall be as Noah's ark, which still rose higher as the waters encreased: these waters may rise from the ankles to the knees, from the knees to the breast, from the breast to the chin, but they shall never overflow the head: we may be washed, we shall not sink; crushed we may be, killed we shall not be: the bowl or bladder may be dipped, but cannot be drowned; the house that is built upon the rock may be
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shaken, but cannot be overthrown. For they that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be moved.

Verse 3. “ *For the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous ; lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity.*” By rod here, expositors generally understand a sceptre or dominion, to which the faithful are oftentimes subject, and to suffer in an high manner : and to such they are subject for their sins, but their comfort is, that God will put an end to those their sufferings; and so keep them, that they shall not (being overcome with the tediousness thereof,) fall away from their godly care to serve the Lord; but by experience finding, that to be thus afflicted was profitable for them, be the more confirmed herein ; therefore when such glorious promises of safety are made as before, they are to be understood of safety from being moved, by enemies prevailing to cast away their faith and hope in God, and consequently their care of godliness ; for none, either men or devils, shall ever thus prevail against the truly faithful, but they shall stand firm as Mount Zion.

Verse 5. “ *As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity: but peace shall be upon Israel.*” There is a judgment denounced against all hypocritical professors of religion ; those that put on religion as a cloak, to cover their worldly and wicked designs ; and use reformation as a stalking horse, to shoot at their private

private ends and interests, these men shall be led away with the workers of iniquity, and be carried to the same place with them, that is, to hell; where they shall receive their portion with their brethren and fellow hypocrites: as their ways have been crooked, so shall their end be, and thus they become miserable by their own election.

PSALM CXXVI.

Verse 1. *“When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream.”*

To carry a man from one extremity to another, puts him upon the greatest extremity; to make the day of a man's greatest rejoicing, to be the day of his deepest sorrows, this is cutting, if not killing sorrow: so on the other hand, to be brought from extreme sorrow to extreme joy suddenly, doth rather amaze than comfort the spirits of a man: as it is said here, that when the Lord turned again, &c. the change was so sudden, that they were rather astonished, and amazed, than comforted with it for a while: and thus to be hurried from extreme joy to extreme sorrow; from the borders of comfort to the brink of death on a sudden, is not so much to afflict a man, as to confound and distract him.

Verse 5. *“They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy.”* There is a tenderness of soul in every regenerate man, to bewail his sins with tears. When Peter had denied his master, and heard the cock crow, he did not stay to make recan-
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tations, he did not stay to satisfy them to whom he had denied Christ, but he looked into himself first; says the Holy Ghost, he wept bitterly; his soul was not withered as long as he could weep. The learned Poet hath given some characters, some expression of the desperate and irremediable state of a reprobate, when he calls the Devil, *Plutonem illacrimabilem*; there is the mark of his incorrigibleness, and also of his irrecoverableness, that he cannot weep. God doth begin the new world (the christian church) as he devoured the old world, with water, with the sacrament of baptism.—Pursue God's example, and begin thy regeneration with tears: if thou hast frozen eyes, thou hast a frozen heart too; weep therefore here, that thou mayest not weep, but rejoice hereafter, and that for evermore; for they that sow in tears, says the text, shall reap in joy: they that sow this seed pearl of penitent tears, shall reap a whole harvest of never-fading joy: they that let drop but some few drops of this precious water, shall be filled and satisfied with whole rivers of that living water, which is said in another psalm, to make glad the city of God.

PSALM CXXVII.

Verse 1. *“Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.”* God who vouchsafed to be man for man, vouchsafes also to do all the offices of man towards man:
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he made us of clay, and so God is our potter, Rom. ix. 21. God stamped his image upon us, and so God is our minter or statuary, Gen. i. 27. God gave us all the fruits of the earth to eat, and so he is our steward, Gen. i. 29. God pours his oil and wine into our wounds, and so he is that physician, that neighbour, that samaritan intended in the parable, Luke x. God plants us, and waters us, and gives the increase, and so God is our gardener: and here God watches the city, and so God is our sentinel.

Verse 3. *“ Lo, Children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.”* Who would not have expected, that seven hundred wives, and three hundred concubines should have furnished Solomon's palace with choice of heirs, and have peopled Israel with royal issue: and now behold! Solomon hath by all these but one son: many a poor man hath an house full of children by one wife, while this great king had but one son by a plurality of wives: fertility is not from nature, but its author; therefore it was upon this account that David sung here, children are an heritage of the Lord. How often doth God deny this heritage of heirs, where he gives the largest heritage of lands; and gives most of these living possessions where he gives least of the dead; that his blessings might be acknowledged free unto both, entailed upon neither; therefore it is added, the fruit of the womb is his reward, that is, his free gift; and God will be their exceeding

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ing great reward, if by their parents' prayers, and good education, they prove towardly as the Lord's heritage: for of such is this expression specially meant, and the following similitude; which imports, that children must have more in them than nature: for arrows are not arrows by growth, but art; so children are God's heritage, when the knottiness of their nature is reformed and smoothed by grace.

PSALM CXXVIII.

Verse 3. *"Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the side of thine house: thy children like olive plants, round about thy table."* The right estimation of a wife, is to account her as next to a man's self, and to look upon her as a yoke-fellow and companion: in this respect the psalmist here, comparing the wife to a vine, placeth her by the sides of the house; not on the top, nor upon the floor, but by the sides of the house, a middle place between both; they that go by our side are our companions; such is the wife to the husband, and so ought to be in his esteem: indeed the formation of woman out of man's rib, clearly represents this truth; on the one hand, she was not made of the head, and therefore not domina, she must not rule over the husband; nor yet any interior part, and therefore not prælate, she must not be before the husband: on the other hand, she was not made of the foot, and therefore not serva, to be kept under as a servant, nor yet of any hinder part, therefore not postposita, to
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be put behind as a child; but she was made of a rib in his side, and therefore socia, to be esteemed and used as a fellow helper.

P S A L M CXXIX.

Verse 1. *“ Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth; may Israel now say.”* God had one Son, and but one Son without sin, but never any without sorrow: we may be God's children, and yet still under persecution, his Israel, and afflicted from our youth up. We may feel God's hand as a father upon us when he strikes us, as well as when he strokes us: When he strokes us it is least we faint under his hand; and when he strikes us, it is that we should know his hand. As God saw that way prosper in the hand of Absalom, 2 Sam. xiv. He sent for Joab; and Joab came not; he came not when he sent a second time, but when the messenger came to burn up his corn, then he came, and then he complied with Absalom, seconded, and accomplished his desires. So God calls us in his own outward ordinances, and a second time in his temporal blessings, and we come not; but we come immediately if he burn our corn, if he draw us by afflicting us; this is the way both to make us and keep us the Israel, the children of God.

P S A L M CXXX.

Verse 1. *“ Out of the depths have I cried unto the Lord.”* God sees it best to let the penitent dwell for a time under their sorrows: he sees

us sinking all the while, yet he lets us alone till we be at the bottom, and when once we can say, out of the depths have I cried unto thee, instantly follows, the Lord heard me; a vehement suitor cannot but be heard of God, whatsoever he asks: if our prayers want success, they want heart: their blessing is according to their vigour; we may call long enough to God, if we cry not to him.

Verse 4. “ *But there is forgiveness with thee: that thou mayest be feared.*” As the mercy of God is the cause of all good, so it is the life and ground of all repentance; for we believe and repent, not because of the justice of God, but because of his mercy: thus David here, there is mercy with thee, therefore we fear thee. Faith without the feeling of love is carnal security, and repentance without the feeling of mercy is desperation: let us make the use of it thus,—is it so that we should seek the love and favour of God; then miserable is the condition of those that provoke the Lord to anger: God is said to be a consuming fire: fire is a devouring and merciless element; if it be before us, nothing more comfortable; if upon us, nothing more devouring: nothing more merciful than God, but if he be provoked, nothing more fearful and consuming: for as the love of God is the cause of all happiness, so his wrath is the cause of all confusion.

P S A L M CXXXI.

Verse 1. “ *Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me.*” No man is ordinarily to attempt any thing beyond his strength, for that is to tempt God. Lord, says David, I do not exercise myself in things that be too high for me: the word is in things too wonderful for me; that is, I do not ordinarily put myself upon things that are extraordinary, or beyond my strength and parts: it is the safest and the most holy way, for a man in all his actions to be upon a level; we cannot but displease God, and hurt ourselves, by clambering. The Lord will sometimes work wonders to relieve our necessities, and help our faith; but he will never work wonders to please our humours, or comply with our ambition.

P S A L M CXXXII.

Verse 2. “ *How he sware unto the Lord, and vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob.*” The first holy votary that ever we read of, was Jacob, here mentioned in the text, who is therefore called the father of vows: and upon this account some think, David mentions God here, under the title of the mighty God of Jacob, rather than any other, because of his vow.—Now a vow is nothing else but a religious promise made to God in prayer, and grounded upon the promise of God, whereby we tie ourselves

selves by way of thankfulness, to do something that is lawful, and within our power, with condition of obtaining some further favour at the hands of God. As the truth of God is in me, says St Paul, 2 Co. xi. 10. so he binds himself with an oath, as the learned observe: and as God is true, our word unto you was not, yea and nay; but in him all the promises of God are yea, and amen. 2 Cor. i. now this implies, that what a christian promises to man (how much more to God) is bound by the earnest penny of God's spirit to perform; and as he looks that God's promises should be made good to him, so he is careful to pay that he hath vowed unto God.

Verse 4. "*I will not give sleep to mine eyes: nor slumber to mine eye-lids.*" It evidences a height in holiness and grace, to have a kind of unquietness upon the spirit till we can do good, and compass holy designs and purposes: when we are not only pious but zealous, as David resolving here; surely I will not come unto the tabernacle of my house, &c.

P S A L M CXXXIII.

Verse 1. "*Behold, how good and how pleasant it is, for brethren to dwell together with unity.*" — It is one of the most delightful spectacles to see brethren to dwell together in unity: behold how good and pleasant it is. The prophet compares it here to the dew of Herman, and to the precious ointment upon the head, that run down to the beard, even Aaron's beard,
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and that went down to the skirts of his garment. Now as it is a pleasure to behold the unity and harmony of brethren: so it is very bitter to see brethren broken off and disjoined from one another: whether they be brethren by blood, or by profession; but chiefly brethren in the faith and profession of the gospel:— Abraham said to Lot, Gen. xiii. Let there be no strife, &c. He would not only have no strife between themselves, but no strife between their servants; and why, for we are brethren—

P S A L M CXXXIV.

Verse 1. “ *Behold, bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord, which by night stand in the house of the Lord.*” Not servants of sin, but servants of the Lord, which stand continually before him: let not your frequent being in his presence breed contempt in you; as the saying is, too much familiarity breeds contempt: but bless him always, acknowledge, and with reverence praise his excellency: this meant chiefly of the priests and levites, who are exhorted in particular to bless God, because to them this office in public was committed, in the name of the other tribes: yet as others are God’s servants, as well as his ministers, hereby is also intimated, that this duty must not be left to God’s ministers, but if thou wilt be God’s servant, thou must likewise acknowledge it to be thy duty to praise God as well as they.

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Verse 3. "*The Lord that made heaven and earth, bleſs thee out of Zion.*" It is not ſaid the Lord bleſs thee out of heaven; but bleſs thee out of Sion. As if he would teach us that all bleſſings come as immediately and primarily from heaven, as mediately and ſecondarily from Sion, where the temple ſtood: if ever therefore we would have bleſſings outward, inward, private, public, ſecular, ſpiritual; if ever we would have bleſſings in our eſtate, bleſſings in our land, in our ſouls, we muſt pray, and pray here, in Sion, in God's houſe: for from the piety there exerciſed, all bleſſings flow, as from a fountain that can never be drawn dry.

P S A L M CXXXV.

Verse 7. "*He cauſeth the vapours to aſcend from the ends of the earth, he maketh lightnings for the rain, he bringeth the wind out of his treaſuries.*" Thoſe vapours and clouds which David ſpeaks of here, St Auguſtine interprets of the miniſtry of the church, that they are thoſe clouds. Thoſe miniſters may have clouds in their underſtanding and knowledge (ſome may be leſs learned than others) and clouds in their elocution and utterance, (ſome may have an unacceptable deliverance) and clouds in their aſpect and countenance (ſome may have an unpleaſing preſence) and clouds in their reſpect and maintainance (ſome may be oppreſſed in their fortunes) but ſtill they are ſuch clouds as are ſent by Chriſt, to bring finners to him.—

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As the children of Israel received direction and benefit, as well by the pillar of cloud, as by the pillar of fire; so do the children of God in the church, as well by preachers of inferior gifts, as of those whose gifts are superior: further, they are called clouds, because their bodies are seen; winds, because their workings are felt: as clouds they embrace the whole visible church, and are visible to it; as winds they pierce into the invisible church, the souls of the true saints of God, and work (though invisibly) upon them.

Verse 8. “ *Who smote the first born of Egypt, both of man and beast.*” This crosseth not that in Ezekiel, xviii. The son shall not bear the iniquity of his father, for God never punisheth the innocent, because all are guilty before him. These Egyptians had slain Ismael, God’s first born; therefore when God came to make inquisition for blood, he gave them blood again to drink, for they were worthy, they had made all Israel cry, therefore they themselves did cry afterwards. Thus God usually retaliates spoil to spoil, Ezek: xxxix. 10, number to number, Isa. lxxv. 11, 12, choice to choice, Isa. xvi. 3, cry to cry, La. v. 1. And it is the observation of Theodoret, that when God smote Pharaoh’s first born, he drew blood of the arm for the cure of the head, and because it mended not, thereupon came all to confusion.

Verse 10. “ *Who smote great nations, and slew mighty kings.*” The persecutors and enemies of the church shall perish and come to confusion,

fusion, be they kings or nations, single persons or common-wealths: they may lift their heads and horns on high, there shall be a downfal, they shall be smitten, and slain, and confounded by God. Look upon Cain, who was the first persecutor of the church in his brother Abel; but did he escape? No, the curse of God came upon him; he was made a vagabond and fugitive upon earth: thus God revenged the innocent blood of Abel: we may see the like respecting Pharaoh, an inveterate enemy of God's church in Egypt, who was overwhelmed in the red sea. In the first place, this must needs be a great comfort to the church, in considering how mindful God is of his children in their distress, he doth not forget their afflictions, he observes the injuries that are offered unto us, as he surely saw the trouble of his people in Egypt, therefore we ought not to sink or faint under our troubles. Secondly, this makes for our instruction, to teach us to refrain anger and revenge towards such as deal cruelly with us. We must be more than a lump of flesh, if we will be the children of God. We see that Stephen when he was stoned, prayed for his persecutors, Acts, vii. The like we see in our blessed Saviour towards them that crucified him: and there is great reason for this, because it is the proper office of God to right and revenge the quarrels of his children: upon this account, St. John, Rev. xiv. after the fortelling of the troubles and persecutions of God's church, adds, here is the

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the patience of the saints ; declaring thereby what our armour and weapons of defence are to give us victory over our enemies.

Verse 18. “ *They that make them are like unto them : so is every one that trusteth in them.* ” —

The royal prophet here means not only the idols of the heathen, which have neither sight in their eyes, nor hearing in their ears, nor breath in their nostrils, nor help in their hands, to wipe away the dust from their own faces ; but even those that make them, or trust in them, says he, are like unto them. Whatsoever the world hath, visible or invisible, outward or inward, robbing God of his right, and bearing our hope and heart after it, it is our idol in some sort, and we make ourselves like unto it when we worship it : thus the covetous man is called an idolater, in plain terms, Eph. v. Job expresseth the right form of their canonization, whereby they make gold a god ; they say to their wedge, thou art my confidence. As treason and rebellion putteth up a new king, so covetousness a new god, Mammon for Jehovah. Other idolaters there are, who like those in Hab. i. sacrifice to their own acts ; and because their estates are encreased by these instruments and helps which they use in their trades of fishing and the like, they forget the right anchor of their thrift, and arrogate all to themselves and their serviceable means. Some make an idol of their own brain, as the king of Tyre did, Ezek. xxviii.

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Such are the wicked politicians of our sinful age. All these idolaters are like the idols they trust in, nothing; for yet a little while, and the moth, the worms, rottenness and corruption shall inherit them all.

P S A L M CXXXVI.

Verse 4. “ *To him who alone doth great wonders: for his mercy endureth for ever.*” God hath preserved to himself the power of miracles, as his prerogative; for the Devil does no miracles; the Devil and his instruments do but hasten nature, or post-date nature, bring things sooner to pass or retard them: and however they pretend to oppose nature, yet still it is but upon nature, and by natural means that they work: only God shakes the whole frame of nature in pieces, and in a miracle proceeds so, as if there were no creation yet accomplished, no course of nature yet established. *Facit mirabilia magna solus*, says David, here, there are *mirabilia parva*, some lesser miracles, that the Devil and his instruments, Pharaoh’s forcerers can do, but when it comes to *mirabilia magna*, great wonders, so great, that they amount to the nature of a miracle; *facit solus*, God, and God only does them.

Verse 15. “ *But overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea: for his mercy endureth for ever.*” I know that the gospel is a book of mercy; I know likewise, that in the prophets there are many assertions of mercy; I know likewise

likewise, that in the ten commandments, which are the ministration of death, there is made express mention of mercy, I will have mercy upon thousands : yet, notwithstanding all this, if every leaf and every line, and every word in the Bible were nothing but mercy, it would nothing avail the presumptuous sinner: Our God is not an impotent God with one arm, but as he is slow to anger, so is he great in power; and therefore though in this psalm there is nothing but his mercy endureth for ever, which is twenty-six times in twenty-six verses: yet mark what a ratling thunderclap there is in this verse: in our addresses therefore unto God, let us so look upon him as a just God, as well as a merciful, and not either to despair of, or presume upon his mercy.

Verse 20. “ *And Og the king of Bashan : for his mercy endureth for ever.*” We see here another judgment of God upon another enemy of the church, and the mercy of God in his overthrow, after the destruction of the former enemy: God could have brought them together and bound them in one bundle to be cast into the fire, but they are destroyed one after another, some in the days of Moses, others are reserved for Joshua, who succeeded Moses in the government of the people; from whence we learn, that the enemies of God and his church are not consumed in a moment, but in the providence of God, by little and little, one after another, as they sin against

him: and this is done to the end, first, that by them God may try the faith, and exercise the patience of his servants; God will have them proved, to declare to themselves, and manifest to others what is in their hearts.—Wherefore it is necessary, that so long as we live in the world, we should be kept in a continual exercise of prayer, of faith, of repentance and obedience, as God's design was Jud. ii. 20. Secondly, to teach the wicked that their prosperity cannot assure them of the favour of God, nor secure them from his punishments. It sheweth indeed the patience and long-suffering of God towards the vessels of wrath, to make them without excuse; but when they have filled up the measure of their sins, they shall know that God hath not forgiven nor forgotten them.

Verse 22. "*Even an heritage unto Israel his servant: for his mercy endureth for ever.*" God many times bringeth the godly and faithful that please him, to inherit the lands and possessions of their enemies: howsoever God's servants are many times thrust out of house and home, and have their lawful possessions taken from them, as we see in Naboth's vineyard, and Abraham's well, yet sometimes God returns in mercy to the faithful, and makes the substance and inheritance of the wicked to descend upon them; this is confirmed, as here, so in Exodus, at the departure of Israel out of the land of Egypt; where they borrowed of the
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Egyptians jewels of silver and gold, with change of raiment : this likewise is declared by the wise man, Prov. xiii. 22. The riches of the sinner, are laid up for the just: as also by Job, xxvi 16, 17. Though the ungodly heap up silver as the dust, and prepare raiment as the clay; he may prepare it, but the just shall put it on, and the innocent shall divide the silver.

P S A L M CXXXVII.

Verse 1. “ *By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea we wept, when we remembered Zion.*” The term of sitting, here signifies, the diuturnity of these Israelites misery: they had spent in lascivious rioting and prophaneness, when they sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play; but now they have time enough to tame their flesh, and bring their bodies into subjection, their pride is turned into poverty, a fit livery for their sinful habits, for taking their pleasure above measure, they are now filled with sorrow above measure.

Verse 3. “ *For there they that carried us away captive, required of us a song; and they that wasted us, required of us mirth, saying, sing us one of the songs of Zion.*” If Zion be wept for, harps must be hung upon the willows; sad objects require furrows in the cheeks and rivers in the eyes: away then ears wantoned to loose sonnets; offend not with unchaste attentions these hallowed anthems: here is broken harmony, dir-

ges as fullen as they are sacred, panting and heart-burning elegies, such as should be rather groaned than sung: Israel's music must be like Israel's condition, doleful and sad.

Verse 7. “ *Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom, in the day of Jerusalem; who said, rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof.*” As it is our duty to remember the Lord, so it is our privilege that we may put him in remembrance. There are four things which the faints usually move the Lord to remember,—his own mercies, his covenant, their own frailty, and last of all the rage and blasphemies of his and their enemies. Thus the church of the Jews cry here unto the Lord, Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom, &c. When a man is wronged, who intends revenge, he will say to the party wronging him, I will remember this: revengeful men have strong memories, so hath the God to whom vengeance belongeth; he will certainly remember the sinful revengeful cry of Edom against Jerusalem, though the sins of Jerusalem did cry to him for vengeance.

Verse 9. “ *Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.*” It was St Bernard's advice to his sister, to mark well what God said of the woman to the serpent, she shall bruise thy head; the Father himself answers: The head of the serpent is then said to be bruised, when sin is there stifled, where it is first born. He is a religious Herod that
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kills such infants, nor shall he want the name of happy (as our royal prophet speaks here) that dasheth thy little ones against the stones, the Hebrew, and the margin of our English Bibles have it, against the rocks. A mystery that concerns us all, cried St Augustine, for that rock is Christ. Doth the tender conscience complain of young growing sins, away with them to the rock Christ, that rock hath strength to bruise them. Doth lust kindle a flame in our heart of loose lascivious cogitations, away with them to the rock Christ, that rock hath water to quench them. Lastly, do we find God's anger kindled against us for these sins, away again to the rock Christ, that rock hath holes to hide us in.

P S A L M CXXXVIII.

Verse 1. *“ I will praise thee with my whole heart, before the gods will I sing praise unto thee.”* Holy places being the residence of God's name upon earth, there where he hath put it, God hath sent his agents to possess them in person for him : churches and oratories are regions and courts of angels ; and they are there, not only to minister to the saints, but also, they possess them in the right of God ; and therefore holy David knew that his addresses to God were in the presence of angels: I will praise thee before the angels: so saith the septuagint. Now were the rudiments of the law worthy of an attendance of angels, and
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are the memorials of the gospel destitute of so brave a retinue: did these beatific spirits wait upon the types, and do they decline the office at the ministration of the substance; we have little reason to think so; therefore St Paul still makes use of the argument to press women to modesty and humility in churches because of the angels; and upon the same stock St Chrysostom chides the people of his Diocese, for walking, and laughing, and prating in churches; the church, saith he, is not a shop of merchandise, but the place of angels, the court of God, and the image or similitude of heaven itself.

Verse 3. *“ In the day when I cried, thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.”* As man is compounded of body and soul, so hath he a double strength, the one in relation to the body, the other to the soul; and this strength of the soul is a good conscience, which is as marrow to the bones, as a back of steel to a bended bow, as a bait by the way to a generous horse; it beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things, as St Paul speaks of charity, 1. Cor. xiii. And as a man that hath plenty of good blood and fresh spirits in his body, being well lined within, as we say, can better endure heat and cold, than he that is otherwise; in like manner, he that hath his heart full of heaven, his conscience full of comfort, is in a case to do and suffer much for and from

from God, and man: the face of such a man's conscience will appear in his countenance, as St Stephen's did, Acts, vi. 15.

Verſe 8. “ *The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever; forſake not the works of thine own hands.*” It is an argument moving the Lord to much compaſſion, to tell him that we are his works, as we are his creatures; and his works, eſpecially as we are new creatures. When we are under ſuch afflictions as threaten to ruin us, it is reaſonable to tell the Lord he made us: David ſtrengthens his prayer upon this argument, forſake not the works of thine own hands: all men love their own works, many doat upon them; and ſhall we think God will forſake his. There is but one argument ſtronger than this among all the topicks of prayer, and that never fails, namely, that God hath redeemed us, or that we are his redeemed ones. God beſtowed much coſt upon us in the work of creation, and therefore under that title he can hardly caſt us off; but he hath beſtowed ſo much coſt upon us in the work of redemption, that he will never caſt us off.

P S A L M CXXXIX.

Verſe 2. “ *Thou knoweſt my down-ſitting and mine up-riſing, thou underſtandeſt my thoughts afar off.*” The Lord hears the leaſt whiſpering, the leaſt breathing of the ſoul; he doth not only hear our loweſt ſpeech, but he hears our very thoughts:

thoughts: thoughts are the first born of the soul, the language of our hearts; this language of our heart is as loud in the ears of the Lord, as thunder is in ours. Yea, he understandeth our thoughts afar off, i. e. long before we think them. He to whom all things are the present time, cannot but know that which to us is future; and he from whom all things receive their being, understands those things, which as yet have no being: now if God understands our thoughts at this distance, even before we think them, then, surely he hears all our words (which are thoughts formed and made up) as soon as we have spoken them.

Verse 7. "*Whither shall I go from thy spirit; or whither shall I flee from thy presence.*" There is no flying from the presence of God, because he is present every where: no adulterer that hath waited for the twilight, no whispering calumniator, that hath shot his arrow of slander, and wounded the righteous in secret, can say, God is not here, God sees not this; for even in the ways of death and hell, (in all thy sinful courses) though God be a God of pure eyes and cannot behold evil, he sees thee in thy way thither: and when thou shalt make thy bed in hell, that is, enter into that perpetual prison, there will he be felt though not seen.

Verse 8. "*If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.*" Turpe quid acturus te sine teste time,
A man that is about any evil should stand in

awe, even of himself, how much more of God: seeing God is all eye, and beholds the most secret of all thine actions. The proverb is, *si non este tamen caute*; carry the matter, if not honestly, yet so closely and cleanly, that the world may be never the wiser. How cunningly did David act to hide his sin, but it would not be: there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed. If I make my bed in hell (saith David here; as indeed the places where fornicators lodge are little better) behold thou art there; and indeed, if men did but seriously think upon this truth; that God is that eye of the world, evermore open to pry into all their actions, it would be the most forcible persuasion under heaven, to keep them from this or any other sin. If you will need sin (saith St Bernard) make choice of some place, where neither God nor his angels are; but if there be no corner so dark, so solitary, so secret, but that both God and his angels are there present, let there as well be no corners so dark, so secret, so solitary for any of you to commit the least sin in.

Verse 16. *“Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect, and in thy book, all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.”*—A skilful architect, before he builds, draws a model, or gives a draught of the building in his book, or upon a table; there are all the parts of the building written, while as yet there were

were none of them, from whence we may learn, not to be proud of what we are, all is the work of God ; how beautiful, or comely, how wise, or holy soever we are, it is not of ourselves ; what hath any man either in naturals, or supernaturals, which he hath not received ; despise not what others are or have, though they are not such exact pieces, though they have not such excellent endowments as yourselves, yet they are what God hath made them ; despise not what yourselves are, many are ashamed to be seen as God hath made them ; few are ashamed to be seen what the Devil hath made them ; many are troubled at small defects in the outward man, few are troubled at the greatest deformities of the inward man ; many buy artificial beauty to supply the natural, few spiritual to supply the defects of the supernatural beauty of the soul.

Verse 20. “ *Search me, O God, and know my heart : try me, and know my thoughts.*” As long as I have God by the hand, and feel his loving care of me, I can admit any weight of his hand, any furnace of his heating, any trial, any searching of his ; let God mould me, and then melt me again ; let God make me and then break me again ; as long as he establishes and maintains a rectified assurance in my soul, that at last he means to make me a vessel of honour, to his glory ; howsoever he search, rebuke, or chastise me, yet he will not rebuke me in anger, much less chasten me in hot displeasure.

P S A L M. CXL.

Verse 1. “ *Deliver me, O Lord, from the evil man: preserve me from the violent man.*” David prays here to be delivered from the evil man that was within him: the devil hath not so powerful an instrument, nor so subtil an engine upon thee as thyself; who, in this world, is not troubled with this evil man? when thou prayest with David, to be delivered from this evil man, if God ask thee whom thou meanest, must thou not say thyself, canst thou shew God a worse; if a man were not evil in himself, the worst thing in the world could not hurt him; the Devil would not offer to give fire if there were no powder in thy heart; to be delivered therefore from the evil man, is to be delivered from the temptations within thee. Now David repeats this from the evil man, twice in this psalm; in one place, a viro malo, is in that name meish, which is a name of man proper only to the stronger sex, and intimates snares and temptations of stronger powers, or when fear or favour tempts a man to come to a superstitious and idolatrous service; in the other it is but meadam, and that is a name common to men, women, and children, intimating, that omillions, negligences, infirmities, may incumber us, ensnare us, even in the true place of God’s service; and the eye may be ensnared as dangerously in this place, as the ear or the tongue in the

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chamber

chamber; therefore good reason have we to pray to be delivered from the vile man, from ourselves, even then when we are at God's service and worship.

Verse 7. "*O God, the Lord, the strength of my salvation; thou hast covered my head in the day of battle.*" Some interpret this of a spiritual combat with temptations, that God would cover his head, that temptations should not prey upon him; and if at any time they should, yet he would so cover him, that those sins should not kill him outright, which is meant by covering the head; where, as some think, is the seat of life; therefore the serpent is said to take the chiefest care of her head, that it be not wounded; and so long as that is secure she will live; the same is God's care for his servants.

P S A L M CXII.

Verse 2. "*Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.*" The lifting up of the hands was a gesture of prayer, even among the Heathens; amongst the Jews, prayer and the lifting up of hands was one and the same thing, let the lifting of mine hands be an evening sacrifice: and longer than Moses' hands were lifted up, his prayer had no effect: can I think to receive ease from God, with that hand that oppresses another; mercy from God, with that hand that exercises cruelty upon another; or bounty from that hand, that with-
holds

holds right from another: prayer is our hand, but it must be a clean hand, pure prayer.

Verse 3. “ *Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, keep the door of my lips.*” Set a watch before my mouth, was David’s prayer; and in the law of Moses, the vessel that had not the covering fastened to it, was unclean; therefore the inner parts of a fool are resembled to a broken vessel, which hath neither partition nor covering. Hereupon those more nobly bred among the Romans, learned first to hold their peace, and afterwards to speak, for he is an ill treasurer of his thoughts, that keeps not the door of his lips shut; and that heart is never locked fast upon any secret, when a profuse tongue lays interest to the key.

Verse 5. “ *Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness; and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head; for yet my prayer also shall be in their calamities.*”—Sharp truth takes better with an honest heart, than a smooth supposition. Seneca compares flattery to a song, but it is a Syren’s song, and our ears best be stopped to it; for like the poison of asps, it casts into a sleep, but that sleep is deadly. Those that had the sweating sickness, died assuredly, if suffered to sleep, those were their best friends that kept them waking, though happily they had no thanks for it; so are wise and merciful reprovers; faithful are the wounds of a friend. Gerson, that great chancellor of Paris, was full glad of them, who

never took any thing more kindly than to be plainly dealt with. The bee can suck sweet honey out of bitter thyme, yea out of poisonous hemlock, so can a wise man make benefit of his friends, nay of his enemies' reproof: it is good to have friends, so they dare deal freely, this an enemy will do for spite and malice, which though it be an ill judge, yet may prove a good informer. St Augustine, in an epistle to Jerome, approves well of him that said,—there is more good to be got by enemies' railing, than friends' flattering, those sing lullabies that cast into a dead lethargy, and should therefore be served as Alexander served a certain philosopher, whom he chased out of his presence, and gave this reason, because he had lived long with him, and never reprov'd any vice in him; upon this account David here would take knocks from a righteous man for kindness; but the precious oil of the wicked he did cry out against as the breaking of his head: for so divers commentators read this text.—Reproofs and corrections, though sharp, and unpleasant, yet if looked upon as issuing from love that lies hid in the heart, they are faithful, that is, fair and pleasant, as the Chaldee interprets it: but yet by the way, we are to take notice, that our prophet here allows reprehension to be only a rod, and not a flayl, a hand to lash the transgressions of men, or times, but not (as some do) to thrash them; for it is with the word of the reprover, whether preachers,

or

or others, as it is with fire, which both molifies and hardens steel according to the variety of heats; it is the temperate and gentle fire that sparkles into zeal, when that which is too high, grows in an instant both to flame and ashes.

P S A L M. CXLII.

Verse 2. *“I poured out my complaint before him: I shewed before him my trouble.”* The committing our cause to God is at once our duty, our safety, and our ease; thus David says here, I poured out my complaint before him, I shewed before him my trouble. David brought out his evils, and set them as it were one by one in the sight of God, and told him, thus it is with me; we may see David acting this to the life, when Absalom had fomented a most unnatural rebellion against him, his words to Zadok shew the true picture of him in this particular, II. Sam. xv. 25, here was self-resignation, and cause-committing to the height; and when David had brought his heart to this, his heart was unburthened, he (doubtless) found the weight and stress of the whole business lying upon God himself; his cause was with God, and his cares were with God; and therefore, though his throne shook, his heart was fixed; nor do I find his heart was ever more fixed than in this stress, while his throne and crown were tottering: he that commits his cause to God, breaths a composed spirit,

when the greatest storms and distractions are upon his body or fortune, upon church or state.

Verse 3. "*When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path: in the way wherein I walked, have they privily laid a snare for me.*" When David was at a stand, in a maze and labyrinth, then God presented him with a clew of his providence, and led him out of those straits; nothing less than overwhelming, than utter destruction of body and soul will satisfy the persecutors of God's church and children; but the Lord knows how to deliver his Peters out of the hands of Herod, and from all the expectations of the people of the Jews: God hath ways of his own, such as we think not of; when we think there is no way but one with us, God appears as out of an engine, and pulls us out of the jaws of destruction.

Verse 5. "*I cried unto thee, O Lord; I said, thou art my refuge, and my portion in the land of the living.*" We may observe here the Lord's dispensations in his manner of working with his children, who not only suffers them to be troubled, but brought so low by trouble, that in their own sense they are almost consumed: both in outward and inward troubles doth the Lord humble them so far, that they are brought even to the door of death, that their faith, and his truth may be the more manifested. Thus, the Apostle protests; that he re-
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ceived in himself the sentence of death, 2 Cor. i. all for this end, that he might learn not to trust in himself, but in God, who raiseth the dead: for so long as in danger there is any hope of remedy, our infidelity casts her eye a wrong way; but when we are brought to such extremity, that with Peter we begin to sink in affliction, then we look to the Lord, we crave the help of his hand and he relieveth us; then we cannot but acknowledge that our deliverance is come from him only; and so by the greatness of our troubles our faith is strengthened, and the praise of God's truth more clearly manifested.

PSALM CXLIII.

Verse 2. “ *And enter not into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.*” To justify is only a verdict of not guilty, and a judgment entered upon that; that there is not evidence enough against him, therefore he is justified, that is acquitted; this is a judicial sense of the word, and in this sense if you consider us standing in judgment before God, no man can be acquitted for want of evidence. Therefore says the prophet here, enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified. For if we had another soul to give the Devil, to bribe him to give no evidence against us; if we had another iron to sear up our consciences against giving of evidence a-

gainst ourselves at the last day; yet who can take out of God's hands those examinations, and those evidences, which he hath registered exactly, as often as we have thought, and said, and done any thing offensive in his sight.

Verse 6. "*I stretch forth my hands unto thee : my soul thirsteth after thee, as a thirsty land.*"—The gifts of God given to us are as a spark of fire kindled in our hearts, and our corruptions are as water seeking to quench them; we should be careful in kindling this fire, and in blowing those coals, that the talents committed to us may be increased, and the Lord at his coming would receive his own with advantage; we must always grow in the graces of the spirit, and desire new strength to be given us to supply our weakness: our souls must long after him as a thirsty land, and blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled; if we have these appetites, using all the means which God hath appointed, and being careful to honour him for that which we have already received, I am persuaded that he who hath begun this good work, will perfect and finish the same.

Verse 10. "*Teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God : thy spirit is good, lead me into the land of uprightness.*" We are not justified by ourselves, we are not brought into the land of uprightness through our own power, the strength of our own nature, but we are led thither

thither by the spirit of God : thy spirit, O Lord, is good, saith David here, lead me by that spirit into the land of uprightness : our will here being like the lower sphere, which moves not unless first moved by another ; if no inspiration, no co-operation ; all our graces spring from Christ, as the branches from the vine, and cease to be graces when they forget their author. Our strength is but borrowed, our going but leading in God's hand, who is to us, what his cloud was to Israel, if he is pleased to make a stand, we know not which way to turn ourselves ; mere nature cannot direct to heaven.

Verse 11. *Quicken me, O Lord, for thy name's sake: for thy righteousness' sake bring my soul out of trouble.*" When we are in trouble, we must make to the righteousness of Christ Jesus, and we shall be relieved: for, as in a flat map there goes no more to make west, east, although they be distant in an extremity, but to paste that flat map unto a round body, and then west and east are all one: so in a flat soul, in a dejected conscience, in a troubled spirit, there goes no more to the making of that trouble, peace, than to apply that trouble to the body of the merits, to the body of the righteousness of Christ Jesus, and conform thee to him, and then thy west is east, thy trouble of spirit, is tranquility of spirit.

P S A L M CXLIV.

Verse 3. “ *Lord, what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him? or the son of man, that thou makest account of him?*” Though man be low in himself, yet God bestows many thoughts and cares upon him, though there be no reason at all in man, that God should magnify him, yet God doth and will; free grace overlooks all the distance that is between God and us, as we are creatures; and it overlooks that greater distance which is between God and us, as we are sinful creatures; a great rich man thinks he doth a poor man a very great favour, if he turns about and speaks to him. We may well cry out with admiration, O the pride of man to man! and, O the love of God to man! one man hath scarce humility enough to speak to another; who in nature is equal to him; and yet God (who is infinitely above us) hath love enough to magnify and set his heart upon him: it is much that God will take knowledge of a man, or cast his eye upon him; but it is a great deal more that God will make account of him.

Verse 5. “ *Bow the heavens, O Lord, and come down: touch the mountains, and they shall smoke.*” The figurative meaning of this is, when God doth but lay his hand upon great men, he makes them smoke or fume; which some understand of their anger, they are presently in a passion, if God do but touch them.

Or

Or we may understand it of their consumption, a smoking mountain will soon be a burnt mountain, and besides, there are mountains in this figurative sense within us, as well as without us: the soul hath a mountain in itself; and it is an act of the great power of God, yea, of an higher and greater power of God to move inward, than it is to remove outward mountains. The prophet foreshewing the coming of Christ, and the sending of the Baptist to prepare his way, tells us, every mountain and hill shall be laid low: Christ did not throw down the outward power of men who withstood him, he let Herod and Pilate prevail; but mountains of sin and unbelief in the soul, which made his passage impassable, he overthrew.

Verse 15. "*Happy is that people, that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord.*" The first part of this verse hath relation to temporal blessings, the second part to spiritual: but as that man that hath no land to hold by it, nor title to recover by it, is never the better for finding or buying, or having a fair piece of evidence, a fair instrument fairly written, duly sealed, authentically testified; so a man that hath not the grace of God, and spiritual blessings too, is never the nearer happiness, for all his abundance of temporal blessings: evidences are evidences to such as have title; temporal blessings are evidences to them who have a testimony of
 God's

God's spiritual blessings in the temporal, otherwise, as in his hands who hath no title, it is a suspicious thing to find evidences, and he will be thought to have purloined them, or to have forged or counterfeited them, and he will be called to an account for them, how he came by them, and what he meant to do with them: so to them who have temporal blessings without spiritual, they are but useless blessings, they are but counterfeit blessings, they shall not purchase one moments peace of conscience here, nor a moments refreshing to the soul hereafter; and there must be an heavy account made for them, both how they were got and how employed.

P S A L M CXLV.

Verse 2. *“ Every Day will I bless thee : and praise thy name for ever and ever.”* Good men honour God and praise his name for ever and ever, in respect of their affections; as being desirous to sing always the loving kindness of the Lord: and in respect of their examples; for that others seeing their good works, are moved to taste of God's greatness and glory, from one generation to another. It is registered, Heb. xi. 4. That Abel being dead many thousand years, yet speaketh, and as the blood of Abel, even so the good deeds of the saints in heaven, as yet do speak to us on earth: Abraham's obedience, Joseph's chastity Job's patience, preach still unto us.

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Verse 6. “ *And men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts; and I will declare thy greatness.*”

David could not, at least David would not, have undertaken this for others, if he had not a true zeal for God’s truth in his own heart: what he would have others do he does himself; men shall speak, says David; they shall, that is, they should, and I wish all men would, says David; but whether they do or not, I will declare thy power and greatness, I will not be defective in any particular.

Verse 9. “ *The Lord is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works.*” Faith, in man is a greater virtue than mercy, because faith uniteth us to God, who is above us, whereas mercy supplies the defects of such who are under us; but in God, who is the greatest, and infinitely above all things created, mercy may be said to be the greatest above all his virtues; I say the greatest in effect, though not in propriety: for whereas God’s indignation is upon the fourth generation of them that hate him; his mercies are upon thousand generations of such as love him and keep his commandments: the mercies of God towards us are more particularly seen in two things especially, in giving whatever is good for us, and in forgiving whatsoever is evil in us, for the first every good and perfect gift is from above. In eternal life we cannot have so much as the keeping of a door, Psalm lxxxiv. 10.—In the spiritual life, not so much as the think-

ing of one good thought: in the natural life, not so much as a morsel of bread ; but all is from above, from God alone: all our benefices are donatives, all our dignities are prebendaries: secondly, as the mercies of God are over all his works, in filling us with his goodness; so likewise over all his works, in forgiving us our sins, and pardoning all our offences, great in number and grievous in nature. The Devil and his angels were thrown out of heaven for one sin; and that not acted neither, but only plotted: and our first parents were cast out of Paradise, for consenting but once to the suggestion of the subtle serpent; but we have a thousand, thousandtimes displeased God, by breaking all his commandments: how merciful then is God towards us, in forgiving all our sins, and covering all our offences, infinite for their multitude, and no less infinite for their magnitude.

Verse 17. “ *The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.*” Although he will of God be the chief mover and director of all his councils, and all his projects, as the prime and peremptory cause, doing this because he will: thereupon divines distinguish between the cause of God’s will, and the reason of his will; that although there be no superior cause of it, yet there is a just reason, and a right end and purpose in it, in regard whereof, it is not simply called the will of God, but the good will of God, Eph. i. 11.
So

So that in his sacred resolutions and designs, though we meet with passages sometimes wound up in darkned terror, the cause whereof we may admire, not scan; yet the drift and main ends of the Almighty have been so backed with the strength of a just reason, that we may rather magnify his goodness than tax his power, and applaud the calmness of an indulgent mercy, than repine at the lashes of an incensed justice.

Verse 18. “ *The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him: to all that call upon him in truth.*” To serve God, and not in truth, is but a mockery of God; those serve God, and not in truth which (as Seneca says of some auditors) come to hear and not to learn, which bring their tablets to write words, not their hearts for the fingers of God to write in:—whose eyes are on their Bible, while their heart is in the count-book; which can play the saints in the church, ruffians in the tavern, tyrants in their houses and cheats in their shop; this eye-service is a fault with men: let us serve God but while he sees us it is enough. Behold he sees us everywhere. If he did not see our heart, it were enough to serve him in the face; but now being omniscient, and omnipresent, he sees the very inside of the heart, therefore it is madness not to serve him in truth,

P S A L M CXLVI.

Verse 3. “ *Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.*” God suffereth men to fail men, that we may have a greater good out of it, than the highest acting of their love and faithfulness could state us in, namely, that we may learn to trust upon God alone, and may better know what creatures are: therefore, saith the Psalmist, trust not in princes, &c. Why not? for his breath goeth forth, that is one reason, he must die, he must return to the earth, therefore trust him not; but besides that, we may say, trust not in princes while their breath tarrieth in them, for it is possible, and very probable too, their help and faithfulness may go forth, though their breath do not: therefore trust only in the living God, he will never leave us although men do: God only is unchangeable he only hath preserved this honour without touch or stain, never to forsake those that trust in him, how forlorn and forsaken soever their condition was.

Verse 4. “ *His breath goeth forth, he turneth to his earth, in that very day his thoughts perish.*” When great afflictions come, especially when death comes, all our purposes are broken off: it is of man to purpose, but we must ask leave of God before we can perform; cross providences break many purposes, but death breaks all. When the breath of great princes goeth forth

forth, in that very day all their thoughts perish; great princes are full of great thoughts; but they who cannot keep themselves from perishing, shall never keep their thoughts from perishing: the imaginary frames which they set up, the contrivances, plots, and projects of their hearts, are all swept away like the spider's web, when themselves are swept away from the face of the earth. The thoughts of many princes and politicians die, while themselves live: Achitophel's purposes were broken and disappointed while himself looked on, and he was so vexed to see it, that he executed himself, because his purposes were not executed: and as the purposes of all about worldly things perish in the approaches of death; so do the purposes of some about spiritual and heavenly things: how many have had purposes to repent, to amend their lives, which have been prevented, and totally broken off by the extremity of pain and sickness, but chiefly by the stroke of death: when they have, as they thought, been about to repent, and as we say, turn over a new leaf in their lives, they have been turned into their grave, by death, and into hell by the just wrath of God.

P S A L M CXLVII.

Verse 4. "*He telleth the number of the stars, he calleth them all by their names.*" God knoweth the number, the names, and the nature of

all the stars: men are not able to tell the number of the stars, they tell distinctly but to a thousand, three hundred, or a few more, and they are not able to call all these by distinct names, but they are constrained to reckon them by constellations, when a whole family of stars are called by one name: the Lord hath made it his special privilege to tell the number of the stars, and to call them all by their names. Now some stars are more excellent, of greater virtue and name than others: God hath made differences and degrees in all creatures, in the heavenly as well as earthly: and although stars differ thus one from another, yet they envy not one another, which lessons us to be content, though God makes our names less famed in the world than the names of many of our brethren; though some are entrusted with more talents, and others have more light than ourselves. One star differs from another star in glory, but no star envies another's glory.

Verse 9. “ *He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens when they cry.*” Why should we distrust God, since we know he careth for sparrows, yea, feedeth the young ravens, that cry unto him. If then in thy greatest need, and most pinching extremity, when thou hast not so much as the mite to throw into the treasury, when all the substance thou hast cannot afford to buy thee meat for one meal to satisfy thee and thine, nor canst look for any help

help from others, and yet rely upon God in his gracious providence, then be assured, that he who sustained his own Son in the desert, by the ministry of his angels, will sustain thee too; and before that thou shalt starve and perish in thy extremity, God will send his angel to feed thee, as he sent his angel to feed Daniel in Babylon.

Verse 20. "*He hath not dealt so with any nation: and for his judgments they have not known them. Praise ye the Lord.*" The scripture, or word of God, is a privilege belonging properly to the church, and the use thereof.—When God gave his law, it was given only to Israel: the church alone is honoured of God, to be the keeper and preserver, the holder forth and publisher of his word, and therefore none have to do with it but the church; hence it is, that it is called by the apostle, the pillar and ground of truth: and for this cause the vision offered to St John, of the seven golden candlesticks, is expressly and directly expounded to signify the seven churches: this then is an honour peculiar to the church, to be the brazen pillar of truth, and the golden candlesticks to hold the light of the word of God to the people, that they may see how to walk in the ways of godliness: and again, all such as are thus honoured and blessed, must be careful to use the word as an honour and a blessing, by embracing it, by entertaining it, by magnifying the blessing of God in truth, and not in
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opinion, in works, and not in words; that we may walk worthy of the gospel, and shew ourselves careful to bring forth the fruits thereof: and this is the best praising of God in the text, when our works praise him.

P S A L M CXLVIII.

Verse 8. “ *Fire and hail, snow and vapour, stormy wind fulfilling his word.*” Every creature obeys the command, and submits to the will of God. Men often speak, and speak in the highest language of commanding, and yet the thing is not done, but whatsoever the Lord speaks is done. Every thing hath an ear to hear his voice, who made both voice and ear: how doth this rebuke man, if he moves not at the command of God, and as God commands. Shall the Lord say to the sun, rise not, and it riseth not, and to the hail or snow, fall not, and they fall not; and shall he say to man, swear not, and he will swear; pray, and he will not pray; shall the Lord have better obedience from the creatures without life, than from man, who hath not only life, but reason: or from saints, who have not only reason, but grace: let it shame us, that there should be any thing in us (who are christians) resisting, or not readily complying with all the commands of God, when snow, and hail, and winds which have not so much as life, obey his voice, and fulfil his word.

Verse 10. “ *Beasts, and all cattle, creeping things*

things, and flying fowl." The world, saith Calamens Alexandrinus, is the first Bible that God made for his own glory and man's instruction; it is a sheet of royal paper, written all over with the wisdom and power of God; it bespeaketh all people at once, as a catholic preacher of God's glory. Thus the heavens declare the glory of God, Psalm xix. without sound, by a dumb kind of eloquence; that is, they yield matter and occasion to man of glorifying God, because that in heaven, as in an open book, is written down the glory of the creator; the like also is done in other less considerable creatures: every beast and creeping thing in the world doth write as well as speak, and hath a pen as well as a tongue to set forth God's praise.

P S A L M CXLIX.

Verse 2. "*Let Israel rejoice in him that made him, let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.*" God hath not only made us, but new made us, for we are his workmanship; the second time created in Christ Jesus, unto good works. We are God's artificial creatures, wherein he hath shewed transcendant skill, by creating the glorious fabric of the new man. William of Malmfbury, telleth of a certain Emperor, who coming into a church on the sabbath day, found there a most mishapen priest, insomuch that the emperor much scorned and contemned him: but when he heard
him

him read those words in the service, " for it is he that made us, and not we ourselves ;" the emperor checked his own proud thoughts, and made enquiry into the qualities and gifts of the man, and finding him a very learned and devout man, he made him archbishop of Cullen, which office he discharged much to his credit, and with great commendations.

Verse 6. "*Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two edged sword in their hand.*" What virtue in the law of God is more often remembered than gratitude, and the thankful acknowledgment of God's mercies : and therefore God gives not any benefits in Scripture without preparing monuments ; if he delivers his people out of Egypt, a lamb of passover, under the title of gratitude, is to be offered for ever ; if he gives manna, a pot of manna ; a pot thereof is reserved in the tabernacle ; if he works wonders with Moses's rod, it is reserved for an eternal memory. Gratitude is the key of the land flowing with milk and honey : ingratitude is a channel from whence all the plagues of heaven pour down upon rebellious and contumacious heads. It is very remarkable, that the Israelites were more careful to carry with them into the deserts timbrels to praise God with, than arms to defend themselves ; therefore, in this verse, praises go before two edged swords, and all warlike engines.

· Verse

Verse 8. “ *To bind their kings with chains and their nobles with fetters of iron.*” The prophet saith not to slay, but to bind them as enemies being subdued or taken, and bound with chains, as that wicked king was bound and carried into Babylon; so the spiritually bound are brought captive to the possession of the church to their salvation; so Christ is said to lead captivity captive, Eph. iv. and his preachers, by the weapons of their warfare, to bring into captivity to the obedience of Christ, 2 Cor. x. and when this is done, vengeance is taken upon them, v. 7. that is, upon their vile lusts, which held them captive before, they being mortified, and the Devil’s power, which held them being broken: the lusts are as it were members, and filthy flesh, upon which vengeance is now taken as a body of death, and now offered up in sacrifice.

PSALM CL.

Verse 1. “ *Praise ye the Lord, praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power.*” Praise him in the firmament of his power, that is, praise him in the firmament wherein appeareth his power: now God’s power appears in the firmament, first by the revolution of the starry sky, which revolution causeth a perpetual vicissitude of day and night, and so declareth the glory of God:—secondly, in the constant course of the sun, who with his motion enlighteneth all things
with

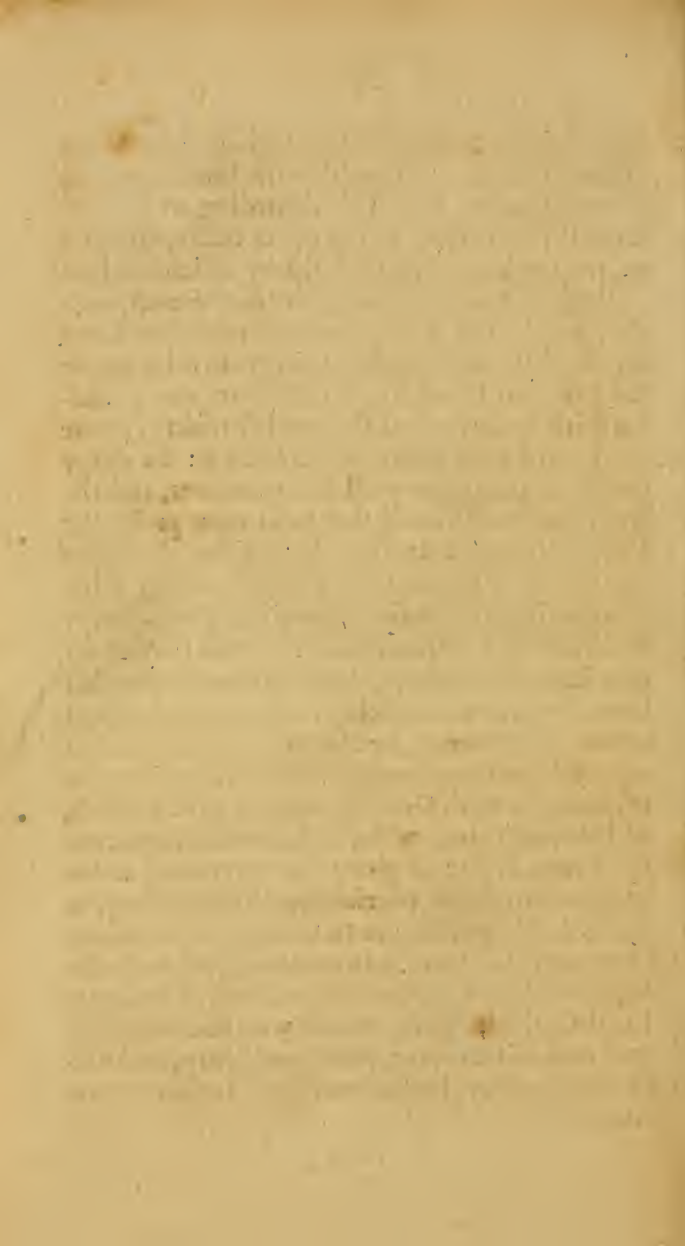
with his light, and pierceth all things by his heat: thus the heavens declare the glory, and the power of God is praised in the firmament, that is, they yield matter and occasion of glorifying and praising God.

Verse 2. “ *Praise him for his mighty acts:—praise him according to his excellent greatness.*”—

God’s noble acts, as they are extended towards us, are sumerarily reduced into these two, his works of creation and redemption:—The work of creation is so mighty, that none could bring it to pass but the father Almighty: that God should have nothing, but nothing, whereof, wherewith, whereby, to build this high, huge, goodly, fair frame, is a principle which nature cannot teach, and philosophy will not believe. The work of redemption is of far greater might and mercy, for the making of the world was (as I may so speak) only lip-labour unto God, he spake the word, and it was done, Psalm xxxiii. but Christ in redeeming the world, said many words, and performed many wonders, also suffered many wounds: He suffered for us, and that death, that violent death, that accursed death of the cross: and here the greater our deliverance at any time, the greater our thanks should be; for as it followeth in the text, God is to be praised according to his excellent greatness.—It is true, that our most and best praises are few in number, and little for measure; whereas God is infinite for his goodness, and in his greatness

greatness incomprehensible: so that the meaning of David is, that we should praise him according to our capacity, and not according to his immensity; according to the grace bestowed upon us, and not according to the glory which is in him

Verse 6. "*Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord.*" Let every creature praise the Lord for his estate of conviction; every christian praise the Lord for his estate of reflection; every blessed spirit loosed out of the world's misery, praise the Lord for his estate of perfection: let every creature, man above all the creatures, and the soul of man above all that is in man praise the Lord; let every thing that hath either the life of nature, or of grace, or of glory; let every spirit whether it be terrestrial or celestial, of whatsoever condition, age, or sex, praise the Lord: further we may learn from hence, that whereas the prophet here after a dozen hallelujahs hath not done, but addeth a thirteenth; he thereby insinuates, that when all our devotion is finished, it is our duty to begin again with God's praise; for as of himself, and through him, and for him are all things, even so to him is due all glory for evermore, as his mercies are from everlasting to everlasting, so likewise his praises are to be sung for ever and ever, and in the world to come we shall eternally sing, as it is in the Revelations, holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and which is, and which is to come, praise and glory, and wisdom and power, be unto our God for evermore. Amen.

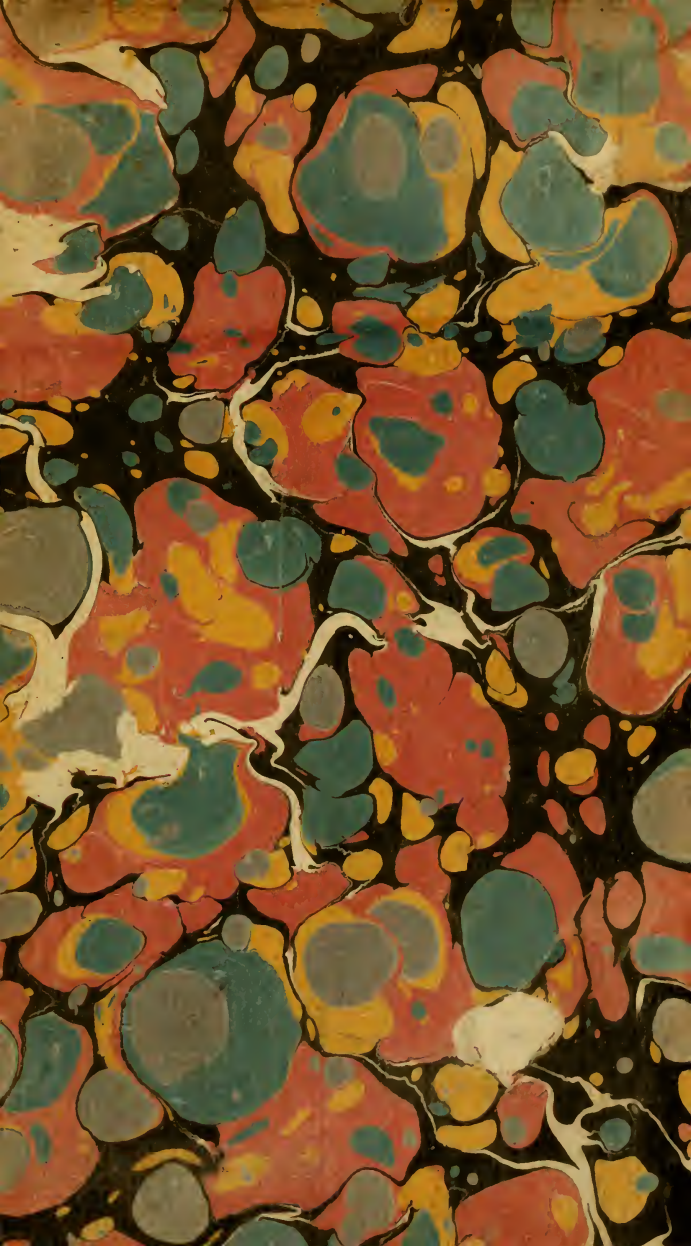




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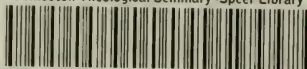
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